

FORMS OF INDIVIDUALITY AND LITERACY
IN THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN PERIODS

UTRECHT STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL LITERACY

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IN THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN
PERIODS

Edited by

Franz-Josef Arlinghaus



BREPOLS

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Preface

Franz-Josef ARLINGHAUS

The aim of the contributions collected in this volume is to discuss a sociological concept of ‘individuality’, inspired by system theory, and analyse it through the investigation of different medieval and early modern sources. The volume is based on papers given at a conference in Bielefeld in 2009, and I have a vivid memory of the inspiring discussions that took place then.

I thank the Gerda Henkel Foundation (Düsseldorf), which made the conference possible, and the University of Bielefeld, which co-financed the event. My thanks go to the administration of the Department of History of the University of Bielefeld, in particular to Ralf Möller, who provided all kinds of practical support during the conference.

Michael Hohlstein, now at Konstanz, and Hiram Kümper, now at Mannheim, read all articles and carefully spotted failed wordings or inconsistencies. The translators Anthony Alcock (Kassel) and Marco Wittwar (Morsbach) patiently worked their way through the contributions of the German-speaking authors and discussed ambiguous passages with them.

My special gratitude goes to the editor of the *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* series, Marco Mostert (Utrecht), who accepted the volume for publication in the series, read all articles, and adjusted them so that they conformed with the series’ format.

The best one can hope for from collected volume is that the authors contribute in one way or another to the discussion of the central theme.

I am very grateful to all contributors for taking on the suggested theoretical concept – whether they found it convincing or not.

Conceptualising Pre-Modern and Modern Individuality: Some Theoretical Considerations*

FRANZ-JOSEF ARLINGHAUS

*Si je ne vaud pas mieux,
au moins je suis autre*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

I wan'na be like you
The Monkey Song

Abstract

The paper distinguishes two types of individuality: in the pre-modern era, people conceptualised their individuality by constructing themselves a place in *society*. The suggestion made here differs from older research that sees pre-modern individuality bound to *groups*. In the modern era, in contrast, people place their selves outside or next to society. In this respect, pre-

* I would like to thank the PhD-students, research assistants and assistant professors at Bielefeld University who discussed an earlier version of this text during a seminar. Such discussion is the best an author can hope for; in this case it led to considerable rewriting. I would also like to thank Mirko Wittwar who revised my English and, if not otherwise indicated, translated the German quotations.

.....

Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 1-45.

modern ‘inclusion individuality’ and modern ‘exclusion individuality’ differ strongly from each other.

These different forms of individuality are closely linked to the different structures of modern and pre-modern society. In this respect, asking why concepts of individuality have changed amounts to asking why society has changed – and this question is still unanswered, of course. However, bringing individuality and society so closely together questions concepts that see individuality as being a (timelessly) given or want to connect it to changes in mentality based on, for instance, certain features prominent in Christianity.

The advantages in conceptualising individuality in this way may be seen in the possibility to historicise the phenomenon and mark differences without describing pre-modern individuality as being deficient. Placing the self within the frame of pre-modern *society* does not, of course, prevent the single person reflecting about him / herself and developing a strong self-consciousness. In this respect, the paper does not see a difference in ‘self-reflection’ and ‘self-consciousness’ in modern and pre-modern times *in general*, but *in the way* people do so (which can be attributed to the different societal frame these reflections are linked to).

To make the proposed shift from ‘bound to groups’ to ‘inclusion individuality’ more clear, I would like to mention two points: 1) pre-modern autobiographical texts show that their authors place themselves in society through putting themselves in parallel with other deliberately and consciously chosen persons; and 2) pre-modern authors built their self-consciousness strongly on ‘being better than others’ or on an over-fulfilment of norms, while modern authors emphasise ‘being different from others’. The comparative ‘better’ (in contrast to ‘different’) marks a self-conscious individuality that is built on (self-defined) links to society.

The two types of individuality just described have a long tradition in sociological research, dating back at least to Georg Simmel and having been enriched with a new theoretical frame by Niklas Luhmann. They are, however, still somewhat alien to historical research. In this respect, the article and the volume as a whole are also an attempt to work in an interdisciplinary way and make sociological theory fruitful for pre-modern historical research.

1. Thietmar of Merseburg's Self-Description

Woe is me, a wretch joined in fraternity with so many *noble men* (*proceres*), but with an existence so dissimilar to their worthy manner of life. ... Moreover, my intentions are good. But they have produced little because I have not troubled myself to devote sufficient force to them. I always accuse myself, but not freed myself of guilt as I ought to have. Therefore, I require correction in all things because I have not directed myself to him who is praiseworthy above all. *Now see, o reader, what a fine nobleman I am!* You will see a tiny little man whose jaw and left side of the face are deformed by an ulcer which erupted there and continues to swell. The nose, broken in childhood, gives me a laughable appearance. Of all of that I would regret nothing, if only my inner character were bright. Now, I am a wretch, too prone to anger and resistant to virtue, envious, derisive towards others though myself worthy of derision, granting forgiveness to none though obligated to do so. I am a glutton and a hypocrite, greedy and disparaging. And, to conclude these well-deserved reproaches, I can say that I am much worse than one can possibly say or estimate in any way. It would be permissible for anyone not only to mutter but to openly announce that I am a sinner, and it would be appropriate for me to humbly ask for fraternal correction ...¹

¹ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, IV, 75, ed. Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronik*, ed. and trans. W. TRILLMICH (Darmstadt, 2002: *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 9), pp. 190 ff.: “*Heu me misero, qui tot tantisque immerito sum coniunctus in fraternitate, sed longe dissimilis existo in condigna conversacione! Ego in peccatis iam pene mortuus, ut spero, vivam in lucido conspectu Dei eorundem meritis refocilatus; quia, etsi in hoc seculo parum boni operatus sum, tamen defunctorum semper memor sum. Voluntas mea interdum bona est; sed quia eidem vires aptas suggerere non studeo, parum prodest. Semper me accuso, sed sicut debui reatum non solvo; sumque ideo in omnibus corrigibilis, quia me non converto ad eum, qui est super omnia laudabilis. Agnosce, lector, procerem, et videbis in me parvum homuntionem, maxilla deformem leva et latere eodem, quia hinc olim erupit semper turgescens fistula. Nasus in puericia fractus ridiculum de me facit. Idque totum nil questus essem, si interius aliquid splenderem. Nunc sum miser, nimis iracundus et ad meliora inflexibilis, invidus, subsannans alios ipse deridendus, nulli pro debito parcens, glutto et simulator, avarus ac detractor et, ut haec convicia merito illata concludam, peior sum, quam possit dici vel ullatenus estimari. Unicuique sit fas non solum muttire, quin potius in aperto, quia peccator sum, dicere, et post correptionem fraternam congruit suppliciter orare*”. I follow the edition of Werner Trillmich rather than the older edition of Holzmann, *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. R. HOLZMANN, (Berlin, 1935: *MGH Scriptorum rerum Germanicarum: Nova Series* 9). For criticism of Holzmann's edition see S. PATZOLD, “Nachtrag”, in: Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronik*, ed. W. TRILLMICH (Darmstadt, 2011: *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 9), pp. XXXII–XLVIII, at p. XXXVI. The translation, except the italics, follows *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. D.A. WARNER (Manchester, 2001), p. 203.

In his Chronicle, Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg († 1118) every now and then talks about himself. In the passage just cited he describes his body and character and compares it with his contemporaries. It would be naive, of course, to read these lines as an authentic portrait of Thietmar's self-esteem and inner feelings, but, on the other hand, we would fall short if we just throw them away as one of these typical medieval self-humiliations that could be read as showing oneself off as the perfect, that is: humble monk.² It is not astonishing that Guibert of Nogent and Otloh of St. Emmeram, for instance, portray themselves in a similar way.³ All this seems to be part of a typical *humiliatio* / *exaltatio* game that monks, bishops, kings and emperors played in similar ways.⁴ Our bishop was well aware of the fact that his contemporaries could interpret this self-humiliating description as self-adulation. Another part of his chronicle reads like this: "Externally, I appeared good but I violated my inner being with the worst thoughts. Born of an impure seed, I wallowed in filth like a stinking sow", and – that is important – he comments: "Someone may say: 'You have praised yourself badly'. To that one I respond: this is true, and I do not know anyone worse than myself".⁵ Elsewhere, again addressing his reader, Thietmar stated that he showed more of his bad side than many others ("*Ego conscius*

² H.-W. GOETZ, "Die Chronik Thietmars von Merseburg als Ego-Dokument: Ein Bischof mit gespaltenem Selbstverständnis", in: *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. CORRADINI et al. (Vienna, 2010: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Denkschriften 385 – Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 15), pp. 259-270, at p. 265 (with further literature on Thietmar).

³ See GOETZ, "Die Chronik", p. 269. The newborn Guibert of Nogent is described by himself in his *Monodiae* 1, 3, "like an aborted foetus"; see the edition of E.-R. LABANDE (Ed.), Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. and trans. E.-R. LABANDE (Paris, 1981: *Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Age* 34), p. 18. Guibert's ugliness is discussed by F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "In and out, then and now: The confident self and his relation to society in pre-modern and modern times", in: *Autobiographical Writing and Concepts of Personhood*, ed. S. CHURCH et al. = *The Medieval History Journal* 18.2 (in print).

⁴ G. ALTHOFF, "Humiliatio – Exaltatio: Theorie und Praxis eines herrscherlichen Handlungsmusters", in: *Text und Kontext: Fallstudien und theoretische Begründungen einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Mediävistik*, ed. J.-D. MÜLLER et al. (Munich, 2007: *Schriften des historischen Kollegs: Kolloquien* 64), pp. 39-51, points out that, based on Luke 14: 11, "*Omnis qui se exultat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur*", (self-) humiliation was a kind of prerequisite for exaltation, especially during tenth- through twelfth centuries.

⁵ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, I, 20, ed. TRILLMICH, pp. 23 f.: "*Extrinsecus apparui bonus, interiora violans pessimis cogitationibus; de immundo semine conceptus, volutabar in luto ut immunda sus. Dicat aliquis: male laudasti te! Cui respondeo verum hoc esse, quod deteriolem me nescio*"; trans. WARNER, p. 82. See GOETZ, "Thietmar", p. 265.

mihi multo credibilia tibi quam alius indico”).⁶ This almost seems to anticipate Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who holds that the *Confessions* inform about himself with an openness unknown until then.⁷

Indeed, like many other authors even before the eleventh century,⁸ Thietmar is using topics and stereotypes when describing his self, but he has this in common with many authors from all epochs, even modern ones. That an author reflects on this and on how such a self-description might be read by his contemporaries is not that common and shows the high degree of Thietmar’s self-awareness. He drew on topoi, but even this is reflected in the text – and linked to his self-description. In terms of reflection and – despite, or maybe better: because of his humiliation – self-esteem, the eleventh-century bishop appears to be quite modern. *Nihil novum sub sole?*

2. Pre-Modern Individuality and Teleology

‘Individuality’, together with ‘freedom’ and ‘rationality’, is one of the central categories of modern society, which uses it to claim distinctiveness and superiority against former epochs and to other cultures different from ‘the West’.⁹ The identity of modernity, its ‘self-confidence’, derives in large part from these attempts at delimitation. Seen in this light, a great part of historical research on the subject of individuality has largely provided confirmation of the value-laden self-assurance of our epoch. Indeed, especially sociological

⁶ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VIII, 12, ed. TRILLMICH, p. 452. My paraphrase again relies on the translation of Werner Trillmich (“*Ich zeige mich dir in meinem Schuldbewußtsein viel wahrhaftiger als ein anderer das kann*”; Thietmar, *Chronicon*, p. 453) and, Hans-Werner Goetz (“*Ich zeige mich dir bewusst viel wahrhaftiger als jeder andere*”; GOETZ, “Thietmar”, p. 269), as David A. Warner seems too far away from “*Ego ... tibi ... indico*”, when he translates “Being well aware of my own character, I can give you a more credible report than anyone else” (*Ottonian Germany*, p. 369).

⁷ “*Je forme une entreprise qui n’eut jamais d’exemple ... Je veux montrer à mes semblables un homme dans doute la vérité de la nature; et cet homme, ce sera moi*” (J.-J. ROUSSEAU, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1, *Les Confessions – Autres Textes Autobiographiques*, ed. B. GAGNEBIN *et al.*, 11 (Paris, 1969: *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade*), p. 5).

⁸ Many examples in: *Ego Trouble*, the aim of the volume seeming to be to push the ‘discovery of the individual’, located by Morris in the eleventh century, further back. See C. MORRIS, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (New York, 1987).

⁹ For a transcultural perspective see: *Selbstzeugnis und Person – Transkulturelle Perspektiven: Der Tagungsband der Abschlusstagung der Forschergruppe*, ed. C. ULBRICH *et al.* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar, 2012: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 20).

publications from around 1900 as well as from around 2000 can be read that way. On the other hand, it is fair to say that the same criticism is true for those historians and medievalists who are sure to find an almost ‘modern’ individuality in the twelfth century or even at earlier stages.¹⁰ They not only argue against a still popular picture of the ‘dark’ Middle Ages. Providing modern individuality with a history of a thousand years or more – does that not suggest that ‘our’ form of being is, and – more or less – has always been the way to be? And does this ‘almost’ and ‘more or less’, so often to be found in texts comparing modern and pre-modern individuality, not have a strong teleological bias? There is, no doubt, a difference between these two narratives – the one that links self-consciousness to modern individuality alone, and the one that argues that people (almost) always have been like we are. Nevertheless, both do provide ‘us’ with a feel-good story that, in one way or the other, legitimises our way of life.

What has been said about the teleological aspects of self-consciousness and individuality may also be true for some other aspects – the relationship of person and group, for instance – discussed with respect to our topic. If all these narratives, in one way or the other, may be read as legitimising present-day attitudes towards the self, it has to be underlined, however, that this does not tell us anything about whether these suggestions or assumptions are right or wrong in the first place. Sure, it puts a ‘handle with care’-stamp on these narratives, but this type of criticism does not tell us which content would possibly fit the sources and to the phenomenon itself better. After all, it seems almost impossible to avoid any traces of teleology when dealing with the relationship of pre-modern and modern times. What one might indeed strive for is keeping teleology at a greater distance and challenging a ready-made self-assurance of present-day society when implementing a narrative. Two things may help with doing so: first, ordering and defining what is understood by ‘individuality’ and, secondly, the use of a theoretical framework.¹¹ Both, one may hope, will bring

¹⁰ See the interesting contributions collected in *Ego Trouble*.

¹¹ Rudolf Stichweh points out to the function of (sociological) theory when dealing with historical phenomena (in his case: early modern universities). R. STICHWEH, *Der frühmoderne Staat und die europäische Universität: Zur Interaktion von Politik und Erziehungssystem im Prozeß ihrer Ausdifferenzierung (16.-18. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), p. 12: “Soziologische Theorie wird hier als ein Mittel verstanden, durch eine möglichst strenge Orientierung an funktionaler Analyse und funktionalen Vergleich frühmoderner Gesellschaftszustände moderne Wertbindungen und präsentistische Perspektivenverzerrungen zu kontrollieren. Gerade die Ahistorizität systematischer und theoretischer Begriffe hat in dieser Sicht den Vorteil, daß sie vom Gegenstand hinreichend distanziert, um nicht implizite Urteile hinsichtlich der Modernität vs. Korruptheit frühmoderner Universitätszustände in die Analyse zu übernehmen” (“Here, sociological

about a certain estrangement to a topic which is – much stronger than in pre-modern times¹² – so excessively loaded with emotions and ideologies (‘self-made man’, autonomous individual, freedom etc.) which otherwise are hard to control.

3. Defining Individuality

Defining individuality as a subject of historical research, it seems, is closely linked to how this subject is located in history as such. Two types of approaches and concepts may be distinguished.

3.1 ‘Individuality’ as Being a Given

‘Discovering’ individuality suggests that - at least implicitly – the phenomenon is a given that only has to be detected. The “common veil” that, according to Jacob Burckhardt, covered human consciousness before the Renaissance, is a metaphor that highlights this: individuality was already there, and it was the circumstances – in Burckhardt’s case “faith” but also only being “conscious of [oneself] only as a member of a race, ... family or corporation – only through some general category” – which obviated its appearance. Consequently, it was in “the political circumstances of Italy” that man recognised him / herself as a “spiritual individual”. The main difference between a family- or corporation-

theory is understood as a means for controlling, by the strictest possible orientation at the functional analysis and functional comparison of early modern states of society, modern value orientations and presentist distortions of the perspective. From this point of view, precisely the a-historic nature of systematic and theoretical concepts has the advantage of providing sufficient distance from the topic to prevent us from adopting implicit judgements concerning the modernity vs. corruption of early modern universal states for our analysis”).

¹² See P. VON MOOS, “Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum: Persönliche Identität in Mittelalter und Moderne”, in: *Processi di inclusione ed esclusione: Identità ed Emarginazione – Prozesse der Inklusion und Exklusion: Identität und Ausgrenzung = Annali di sociologia – Soziologisches Jahrbuch* 16 (2002-2003), pp. 253-265, at p. 254: “Schon die elementare Frage, was ein Individuum von der Gesellschaft und anderen Individuen unterscheidet und wie dieser Unterschied fremd- und selbstreferentiell beschrieben wird, ist unter dem Aspekt der Relevanz eine moderne, keine mittelalterliche Frage” (“Already the fundamental question of what makes an individual different from society or other individuals and how this difference is described by way of self-reference or reference to others is – under the aspect of relevance – a modern question, not a medieval one”).

bound person and an individual, in Burckhardt's view, is a culture that already distinguished the Greek from the barbarian, the Arab from "other Asians" who "knew themselves only as members of a race".¹³

Burckhardt's text is now over 150 years old. Nevertheless: it points to general assumptions about individuality prominent even today. Much research still identifies, explicitly or implicitly, the combination of given individuality and circumstances as that which allows or does not allow man to recognise himself. What is more: the yardstick to measure this is whether or how strong a personal self-concept relies on certain groups and 'traditional' (often meaning: 'religious') ways of thinking.¹⁴ In this way, becoming an individual is regularly seen as an act of liberation.¹⁵ Those studies that implicitly or explicitly presume that individuality is and has (again: more or less) always been a given, not by accident try to prove that during 'their' favourite epoch (the early modern or the high medieval periods are two prominent candidates) individuality could already be detected. Within this approach, finding someone who lived in opposition to the norms and values of his / her time, or who lived on the margins of society, seemed to be a good way to prove this.¹⁶ On the other hand, identifying obstacles that presumably prevented people from living their lives – often the Church and state authorities – helped to explain why in a given period individuality was not as prominent as it is today.

The problem here is not so much 'how to become an individual' as 'being able to live her or (mostly) his individuality' despite pressure from society – which, as is presumed, was bigger in pre-modern times. Putting aside the ideological implications, this approach, in my view, has three deficits. First, the definition of what individuality really is does not become very clear. Secondly,

¹³ J. BURCKHARDT, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (Harmondsworth, 1990: Penguin Classics), p. 98.

¹⁴ See, among others, R. VAN DÜLMEN, *Die Entdeckung des Individuums 1500-1800* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), rightly criticised by M. SCHEUTZ *et al.*, "Individualisierungsprozesse in der Frühen Neuzeit? Anmerkungen zu einem Konzept", *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit* 1.2 (2001), pp. 38-59.

¹⁵ R. VAN DÜLMEN, "Einleitung", in: *Entdeckung des Ichs: Die Geschichte der Individualisierung vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. R. VAN DÜLMEN, (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2001), pp. 1-7, at p. 5: "*Die Befreiung von der Tradition ist ein Akt der Selbstfindung*" ("Liberation from the bondage of tradition is an act of finding oneself"). *Tradition* here refer first of all to religion.

¹⁶ See, e.g., T. BOIADJIEV, "Die Marginalisierung als *principium individuationis* des mittelalterlichen Menschen – am Beispiel Abaelards", in: *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. J.A. AERTSEN *et al.* (Berlin, 1996: *Miscellanea medievalia* 24), pp. 111-123, drawing on Abelard.

society is seen as something that is opposed to individuality, almost as its enemy, while even within the frame of this approach it could be argued that it is the process of societal pressure and the desire to be ‘free’ that brings about individuality. And thirdly, it would seem somewhat strange if, while most other basic human experiences – love, childhood, attitudes to death etc. – must be, in the end, seen first of all as societal and cultural phenomena that do change over time, this should not be true for individuality.

3.2 *Learning How to Be an Individual*

Many studies place much more emphasis on changing basic intellectual and mental attitudes over time, on the development of ideas and concepts as the origin of individuality in history. While at least some of these studies would not deny that a nucleus of ‘individuality’ is something inherent in man, emphasis is laid on specific historical conditions and processes that brought the phenomenon to the fore. The main questions asked here are what has made self-consciousness and – as a prerequisite – introspection a prominent concept in history. By asking these questions, this approach at the same time identifies those main elements of ‘individuality’ it considers to be important.

Whereas for some historians secularisation as a movement away from traditional forms of thinking is essential for unfolding individual personalities, especially medievalists, without questioning this in general, underline two aspects of the Christian religion as vital for the development of individuality: the implementation of confession, and the idea that everyone will be individually judged by God. At first sight it seems plausible that both phenomena, so deeply rooted in western religious thought, paved the way to a culture of introspection and self-reflection that, in the long run and combined with other developments, led to self-consciousness and individuality. It must have had effects on the strong ties with families, guilds and other social groups, this approach suggests, which were so important in pre-modern society.¹⁷

Given the importance of the two aspects mentioned, it seems worthwhile to discuss them separately.

¹⁷ P. DINZELBACHER, “Das erzwungene Individuum: Sündenbewußtsein und Pflichtbeichte”, in: *Entdeckung des Ichs*, pp. 41-60 (but see *infra*, n. 19); K.H. OHLIG, “Christentum – Kirche – Individuum”, *ibid.*, pp. 11-40, at pp. 14 f.; M. WAGNER-EGELHAAF, *Autobiographie* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2005), p. 134.

Confession

As is well known, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made annual 'individual' confession to the local priest obligatory. As an institutionalised and even forced form of self-reflection, it seems a good candidate to enhance and develop individuality.¹⁸

Convincing as this may seem at first sight, recent studies profoundly question that confession paved the way to 'individuality'. First of all: in pre-modern times, reflecting on sins was primarily oriented towards a system of norms connected with a catalogue of punishments, at the God-given order of the world, leaving hardly any space for personalised values or attitudes.¹⁹ In this respect, confession does not lead to reflections on the inner self. Rather, these reflections were concerned with relating the deeds and intentions of a given person to the frame of collective standards and principles, explained and enforced by Church and other authorities.²⁰ The search for a conscience uncou-

¹⁸ Sometimes even parallels between confession and modern psychoanalysis are drawn (and are convincing to a certain extent). Cf., e.g., A. HAHN, "Zur Soziologie der Beichte und anderer institutionalisierter Bekenntnisse: Selbstthematization und Zivilisationsprozeß", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 34 (1982), pp. 407-434, at p. 413: "So wie der Analysand auf der Couch des Psychotherapeuten im psychoanalytischen Strukturmodell eine Matrix für seine individuelle Triebbiographie findet, so fand der mittelalterliche Kaufmann, Handwerker, Gelehrte, Priester oder Adelige in der Kasuistik der Summen und Manuale, Beichtspiegel usw. einen Raster für die Beurteilung seiner Sünden" ("Just like the analysand on the psychiatrist's couch finds, by the psycho-analytical structural model, a matrix for the individual biography of his drives, just so, through the casuistics of sums and manuals, confession manuals etc. the medieval merchant, craftsman, scholar, priest or nobleman found a raster for judging his sins"). But Alois Hahn is also aware of the limits of this institution and underlines that 'confession' by itself is far from bringing about modern individuality.

¹⁹ DINZELBACHER, "Das erzwungene Individuum", p. 59, suggests that confession most of the time resembles a kind of "exam at school, where the believer was questioned [by the priest] like a child and thus infantilised" ("*Da die Prüfung [=Beichte] im Prinzip nicht anders ablief als sein Examen in der Schule, wurde der Gläubige, der sich wie ein Kind abfragen lassen mußte, künstlich infantilisiert ...*"). D.W. SABEAN, "Production of the self during the age of confessionality", *Central European History* 29.1 (1997), pp. 1-18, underlines the aspect of power.

²⁰ E. SCHLOTHEUBER, "Norm und Innerlichkeit: Zur problematischen Suche nach den Anfängen der Individualität", *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004), pp. 329-357, at pp. 350 and 356-357: "Aber diese Selbstvergewisserung und Reflexion bezog sich nicht auf eine persönliche Wertung oder die subjektive Einschätzung eigener Erlebnisse im heutigen Sinne, sondern war auf die gottgegebene Ordnung ausgerichtet, so wie sie sich durch die Tradition legitimiert im Laufe der Zeit bewährt hatte. ... Die sich in weiteren Kreisen ausbildende Fähigkeit zur Selbstreflexion führte somit keinesfalls zwangsläufig zu einer Innerlichkeit, die als abgeschlossen gedacht nur dem eigenen 'Ich' zugänglich war, sondern sie eröffnete eine zweite Ebene der Realität."

pled from collective ideas of sin and punishment, and shaped by a more self-directed, individual judgement of what could be good and bad, would probably lead us to late seventeenth century.²¹ Whether this could be seen as the result of a very long process that started during the high Middle Ages is at least doubtful. Rather, we should consider new powerful theological and philosophical concepts which, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, opened up a space for ethical reflection apart from religious authorities.²² It was presumably Immanuel Kant who marked the turning point. For him, conscience draws on a self-obliged awareness of responsibility (*“Das Gewissen ist ein Bewußtsein, das für sich selbst Pflicht ist”*),²³ thus opening up the way – whether this was intentional or not – to individualised forms of morality. It can be left open here whether a centuries-long practice of ‘traditional’ confession led to this

tät, die als eine allgemein gültige und prinzipiell offen zugängliche verstanden wurde. Diese theologisch ausgedeutete Ebene konnte so als eine kollektiv nutzbare gedacht werden, als ein offen zugänglicher Raum, den sich bestimmte soziale Gruppen gemeinsam erschließen konnten, ein Raum, der Sinn und Ziel des eigenen Handelns innerhalb der gottgesetzten Ordnung vermittelte” (“But this self-assurance and reflection did not refer to any individual judgement on one’s own experiences in the modern sense but was according to the God-given order as, over the times, it had proven its worth and been legitimated by tradition. ... Thus, the capability of self-reflection as it developed in wider circles did not necessarily lead to a kind of inwardness which, imagined as being closed off, was exclusively open to the individual ‘I’, but it opened up a second level of reality which was considered generally valid and basically accessible. Thus, this theologically interpreted level could be imagined as being collectively utilisable, as a freely accessible space certain social groups might open up for themselves, a space communicating the meaning and objective of one’s own actions within the God-given order”).

²¹ Confession in a protestant, especially Calvinist context (where public confession is common), is directed towards clearing the group from a member that committed a sin; H. SCHILLING, “Kirchenzucht im frühneuzeitlichen Europa in interkonfessionell vergleichender Perspektive – eine Zwischenbilanz”, in: *Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. H. SCHILLING, (Berlin, 1994: *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung, Beiheft* 16), pp. 11-40, comparing Calvinist, Lutheran and Catholic forms of confession and their effects on self-discipline. See also H.D. KITTSTEINER, *Die Entstehung des modernen Gewissens* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991).

²² KITTSTEINER, *Die Entstehung des modernen Gewissens*, p. 156: “Hinter dieser ganzen Entwicklung zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung steht immer nur eine einzige Frage: kann dem Gewissen eine innere, verpflichtende Kraft zugeschrieben werden, so daß es autonom auf sich selbst begründet ist, oder ist es immer auf reale und imaginäre Strafgewalten bezogen, auf die lohnende und strafende Obrigkeit, und auf Gott und Teufel? Die beiden imaginären Strafinstanzen Gewitter und Hölle verschwinden aus dem Diskurs der normsetzenden Schichten in etwa parallelen Entwicklungsschüben; die Autonomisierung des Gewissens entsteht unter diesem Aspekt als ein Nebeneffekt, weil die vormaligen Straforte von ihm abfallen. Aber woher soll es dann sein verpflichtende Kraft nehmen?”.

²³ Quoted after KITTSTEINER, *ibid.*

fundamental change in the relation between self-consciousness and confession, or whether this change must be attributed to other developments, for instance new forms of societal differentiation in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that demanded, as a consequence, a new relation between person and society, as suggested by our theoretical frame.

The Last Judgement

In the Last Judgement, it seems, the Christian religion possessed a prominent place where the individual person would be made responsible for the deeds and misdeeds performed during his or her lifetime. In pre-modern times, as is well known, the idea of the final judgement was very much present in everyday life, and it did indeed affect the attitudes and activities of noblemen, city dwellers and peasants alike. Paintings and reliefs of the Archangel Michael with the Book of Life and a pair of scales are but obvious illustrations of the importance of this aspect of Christianity for every-day life.

At a closer look, the overall concept of the two judgements – the one directly after death and the Last Judgement at the end of time – is not, at least not only, that of a single soul being confronted with his / her deeds in life. Indeed, the verdict of both judgements is strongly influenced by a variety of different backers and supporters. Leaving aside the saints, the fate of the dead is closely linked to the actions of groups – be it the monks of a certain cloister, guilds or relatives – that would pray for him or her or organise other kinds of assistance.²⁴ What is more: the deceased is not only, as is well known, imagined as being present in this world, he / she is usually conceptualised as being present during group activities (during Mass or depicted on paintings on public display,²⁵ which were not only found in churches, for instance). The *ars moriendi* of the fifteenth century – one of the first was written by Jean Gerson in 1408 – which prepared for the first judgement right after death, point out that the dying in the very hour of their death urgently needed assistance from experi-

²⁴ A. ANGENENDT, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 2000), pp. 659 ff. It is difficult to follow O.G. OEXLE, “Memoria als Kultur”, in: *Memoria als Kultur*, ed. O.G. OEXLE, (Göttingen, 1995: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte* 121), pp. 9-78, at pp. 38 ff. (esp. p. 48), who describes in detail the importance of memory for pre-modern societies as a cultural and group phenomenon, but then argues that it helped to shape individuality.

²⁵ Many examples are given by OEXLE, “Memoria als Kultur”, pp. 43 ff.

enced persons – better not relatives or close friends –, who would help them not to fall into the deadly sin of despair and withstand the temptations of demons and devils.²⁶ While being held responsible by God for the things you have done during your lifetime may lead to reflection, the practices of pre-modern Christian religion were not at all conducive to leaving people alone with their thoughts. The practices mainly provided norms to pave the ways in which this reflection should be performed, and the person's fate after death relied heavily on the assistance of different groups that would support him / her in one way or the other. Maybe this is not an accident, because Christianity, after all, is a religion that centered on congregation and community, as even Martin Luther's theology underlines.²⁷ As Peter van Moos puts it, Christianity places more emphasis on 'de-individualisation' than individualisation.²⁸

To sum up. So far, in search for a definition of the 'individual' or 'individuality', we have followed the traditional lines of research and discussed the concepts that underlie these approaches. A high degree of introspection, self-consciousness and – combined with this – a distance to groups, be they families or other social entities, are at the heart of these definitions. Being different or unique may be seen as a result of self-reflection and of the way a person establishes a distance between him / her and the people around, looking for his / her own way of living and his / her own, 'individual', attitude to the world. Whether it was the political circumstances of Renaissance Italy that helped to

²⁶ A. REINIS, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)* (Aldershot, 2007: *St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History*), pp. 17 ff.; F. BAYARD, *L'art du bien mourir au XV^e siècle: Étude sur les arts du bien mourir au bas moyen âge à la lumière d'un ars moriendi allemand du XV^e siècle* (Paris, 2000).

²⁷ T. KAUFMANN, *Martin Luther* (Munich, 2006), p. 101: "Gerade der Apostel der persönlichen Glaubensgewißheit, für den in 'meinem', im je eigenen Glauben der Dreh- und Angelpunkt des Gottesverhältnisses und der Heilsgewißheit bestand, betonte den Gemeinschaftsbezug der christlichen Existenz wie kaum je ein Theologe vor ihm. Denn das Evangelium selbst stiftet Gemeinschaft und bedarf der Gemeinschaft" ("Precisely Luther, the apostle of individual certainty of faith, for whom 'my own', each individual faith was pivotal for the relation to God and certainty of salvation, emphasised more than almost any other theologian how much Christian existence was related to the community. For the Gospel itself creates community and requires commonness"). It is worth recalling Matthew 18: 19: "Furthermore, I tell all of you with certainty that if two of you agree on earth about anything you request, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven, because where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them".

²⁸ VON MOOS, "Inklusionsindividuum", p. 257, discussing Gal. 2: 20 and 4: 1-7, summarises: "Dem Anspruch nach tritt in der christlichen Botschaft das entindividualisierende Potential stärker hervor als das individualisierende" ("The message of Christianity at least claims to emphasise much more the de-individualising than the individualising potential").

disengage the self, seen as a given, from group ties and superstition, or whether special elements within the Christian religion decisively shaped a new mentality of introspection – both proclaim a kind of ‘development’ of individuality, starting from the fifteenth or twelfth centuries respectively, to the present, often without discussing how much at the presumed starting point ‘individuality’ differed from its present-day forms. Nevertheless, it is interesting to look at certain aspects of Christian religion which, in this context, seem to have fostered introspection, and with it: individuality. However, a closer look at the everyday practices of religion questions these concepts, because they show strong influence of institutions and norms on the way people reflect on themselves, and link the fate of the single person to his or her relationship to groups and institutions such as, for instance, monasteries.

So far, the criticism of the two concepts that describe pre-modern individuality, or better: that describe the origins of modern individuality in pre-modern times, have primarily questioned the causes and impulses that brought about individualism. Individuality, as it has been described up to this point, conceptualises the modern individual as being autonomous, rational and almost independent of a society he – it is mostly ‘he’ – lives in. Developed around 1800, with much ideological bias – consider the debate on individual entrepreneurship versus the state-directed economy during the Cold War – it became somewhat prominent in popular culture during the twentieth century. Frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way” links it to success, and it takes a monkey like King Louis of Walt Disney’s *Jungle Book* to sing a song like “I wan’na be like you”. Nevertheless, sociological concepts of ‘individuality’ as they have been developed during the previous decades tell a different story.

4. *Some Remarks about Present-Day Autobiographies*

“Since the early days of his youth ...”.²⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, with reference to Jean-Paul Sartre, mentions this all too common phrase to show how in biographies and autobiographies events are placed in a chronological order to provide the lives of their protagonists with aims, with sense and direction. In essence, by such stories people endow their lives with a logic and a thread, building relations of causes and effects between events that, at a closer look, hardly ever

²⁹ P. BOURDIEU, “L’illusion biographique”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62-63 (1986), pp. 69-72, at p. 69: “depuis son plus jeune âge”.

were linked causally.³⁰ What is more: the stories people tell about their lives are strongly influenced by official and institutionalised models (like the passport, the curriculum vitae, and official biographies),³¹ and this influence also contaminates the more confidential, private ways of self-reflection. The ideas Pierre Bourdieu presented in his short article match recent empirical findings. Andreas Reckwitz, for instance, analysed how during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an ever-changing social context altered the way in which people described their ‘selves’.³² The self – or, to be more cautious – the texts that try to portrait the inner self and personal individuality, change from decade to decade and are strongly formatted by the *zeitgeist* or the ever-changing social environment.

In fact, the pathos and emphasis with which Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others describe their ‘self’ appear somewhat strange when seen in this light. Some authors of autobiographies from the second half of the twentieth century seemed to be aware of the fact that autobiographies provide their authors and readers with an all too coherent narrative – and draw their consequences. Roland Barthes, for instance, organised his autobiographical text mostly like a dictionary, in alphabetical order.³³ Elias Canetti’s autobiography is interpreted as “a project of auctorial self-creation” (“*ein Projekt auktorialer Selbsterschaffung*”),³⁴ meaning that Canetti conceptualises his autobiography not as *docu*

³⁰ BOURDIEU, “L’illusion biographique”, *ibid.*: “On est sans doute en droit de supposer que le récit autobiographique s’inspire toujours, au moins pour une part, du souci de donner sens, de rendre raison, de dégager une logique à la fois rétrospective et prospective, une consistance et une constance, en établissant des relations intelligibles, comme celle de l’effet à la cause efficiente ou finale, entre les états successifs, ainsi constitués en étapes d’un développement nécessaire”; P. BOURDIEU, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris, 1979), p. 69.

³¹ BOURDIEU, *La distinction*, p. 70: “Le monde social, qui tend à identifier la normalité avec l’identité entendue comme constance à soi-même d’un être responsable, c’est-à-dire prévisible ou, à tout le moins, intelligible, à la manière d’une histoire bien construite (par opposition à l’histoire contée par un idiot), dispose de toutes sortes d’institutions de totalisation et d’unification du moi”.

³² A. RECKWITZ, *Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne* (Weilerswist, 2006).

³³ R. BARTHES, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris, 1995: *Écrivains de toujours*); WAGNER-EGELHAAF, *Autobiographie*, pp. 202 f.

³⁴ WAGNER-EGELHAAF, *Autobiographie*, p. 204: “Ist im Augenspiel [one of three of Canetti’s autobiographical writings] die Rede davon, dass die Literatur in Mittel sei, Menschen durch Worte am Leben zu erhalten, sie gleichsam durch Worte zu erschaffen, so lässt sich diese auch in anderen Schriften Canettis verkündete Programmatik des Schreibens gegen den Tod in allererster Linie als ein Projekt auktorialer Selbsterschaffung lesen, als ein Projekt, dessen Bruchstellen im Lichte der vom autobiographischen Erzähler selbst geschmähten psychoanalytischen Les-

mentation of an inner self but as a *means to create it*. He thus leaves open what kind of ‘self’ might exist outside the text and what it would look like, and seems to put Bourdieu’s ideas into practice. No wonder that, unlike Rousseau and his followers, at the beginning of the twenty-first century the search for an authentic, inner self is no longer on the agenda of many present-day autobiographical texts. Rather, authors are consciously using even fictional means as a tool to test the possibilities and boundaries of narrating their selves.³⁵

Admittedly, concepts of the self as well as the modern genre of the autobiography are getting more and more diverse. Admittedly, libraries and bookshops still provide us with many Rousseau-style texts – and how could it be different, given the dominant ideologies mentioned above that support this kind of self-description. On the other hand, even widespread media like film and TV-series are populated with figures that constantly struggle to bring about a coherent self, and constantly fail to do so. Fiction as a tool of coming to grips with the ‘reality’ of the constructed self³⁶ – this is more than another game in the playground of literature. Categories like ‘discovery of the inner self’ or ‘authenticity’ turn out to be almost alien to this type of autobiography.

But what, then, is left of the individual? Getting back to Bourdieu, a person’s name seems to be the only feature of importance that hardly varies when its bearer changes over time or switches between different social roles. However, this feature, Bourdieu himself observes, lacks a solid content. The name refers to an individual that, after all, turns out to be but a bundle of heterogeneous, ever-changing biological and social properties.³⁷ That during the late

art zutage treten”.

³⁵ M. WAGNER-EGELHAAF, “Zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven der Autobiographieforschung in der Literaturwissenschaft”, *Bios* 23.2 (2010), pp. 188–200, at p. 197: “*Fiktionale Mittel ... dienen in der literarischen Autobiographie dazu, Grenzen und Möglichkeiten von Selbstentwürfen auszuloten*” (“With the literary autobiography, fictional means ... serve for sounding out the limits and possibilities of concepts of the self”).

³⁶ The technical term is ‘autofiction’. WAGNER-EGELHAAF, “Zum Stand und zu den Perspektiven der Autobiographieforschung”, *ibid.*: “‘Autofiktion’ ist nicht der unvermeidliche Einsatz des Fiktionalen in der Selbstbeschreibung, sondern der willentliche und wissentliche, der ganz bewusst eingesetzte und ausgestellte Einsatz der Fiktion, insofern als sie dazu da ist, die ‘Wirklichkeit’ des autobiographischen Ichs zu konstituieren” (“‘Autofiction’ is not the unavoidable use of the fictional for self-description but the purposeful and conscious, deliberate use of fiction, insofar as it has the function of constituting the ‘reality’ of the autobiographical ‘I’”).

³⁷ BOURDIEU, “L’illusion biographique”, pp. 70 f.: “*Ainsi s’explique que le nom propre ne puisse pas décrire des propriétés et qu’il ne véhicule aucune information sur ce qu’il nomme : du fait que ce qu’il désigne n’est jamais qu’une rhapsodie composite et disparate de propriétés biologiques et sociales en changement constant, toutes les descriptions seraient valables seule-*

Middle Ages we find a more ‘flexible’ use of names shall only be mentioned in passing here.³⁸

5. Linking Structures of Society and Forms of Individuality

All this does not mean that there is no such thing as the ‘individual’. “What we need are metaphors and stories”, Caroline Walker Bynum states, “that will help us imagine a world in which we really change yet really remain the same thing”.³⁹ We as individuals and we as a society – to expand on Caroline Walker Bynum’s phrase – are obviously in need of an ‘institution’ like the self or the individual. What is needed is an ‘address’,⁴⁰ a point to refer to that matches the requirements of society and person alike. And it does not seem to be far fetched to assume that all societies at all times were in need of such an ‘address’ or such an ‘institution’; and it is not far fetched either that there are – and that is the main point of this paper – different ways of designing such an address, according to the different historical epochs.⁴¹

But is ‘address’ not too abstract a term to get a hold on a complex phenomenon such as ‘individuality’? How does this fit with the above-mentioned thesis that ‘introspection’ and ‘liberation from group ties’ are pivotal for defining individuality? Certainly, introspection and self-reflection do play an important role here. But they do so not as a tool or a torchlight to find an inner self. Rather, they are means to work on the narratives that would create and shape an institution called individuality.⁴²

ment dans les limites d’un stade ou d’un espace. Autrement dit, il ne peut attester l’identité de la personnalité, comme individualité socialement constituée, qu’au prix d’une formidable abstraction”.

³⁸ See the contribution of C. ROLKER, “Me, myself and my name: Naming and identity in the late Middle Ages”, in this volume.

³⁹ C.W. BYNUM, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York, 2001), p. 188.

⁴⁰ ‘Addressability’ is a term used by P. FUCHS, “Adressabilität als Grundbegriff der soziologischen Systemtheorie”, *Soziale Systeme* 3.1 (1997), pp. 57-80, meaning that communication needs to establish social ‘addresses’ as points of reference for communication (which is also true for communicating with oneself). The way in which these addresses are established varies according to different forms of society.

⁴¹ See the previous footnote.

⁴² See C. ULBRICH *et al.*, “Selbstzeugnis und Person: Transkulturelle Perspektiven”, in: *Selbstzeugnis und Person – Transkulturelle Perspektiven*, ed. C. ULBRICH *et al.* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar, 2012: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 20), pp. 1-19, at p. 3, who suggest to use the expression ‘self-narratives’ instead of ‘autobiography’ and ‘ego-documents’, because ‘self-narra-

Liberation from group ties needs, in the light of what has just been said, differentiated reasoning. Certainly, even in modern times you find people who build their identity strongly on their nationality or their religious belief.⁴³ But even the individuality of those would, according to Bourdieu, Beck,⁴⁴ Reckwitz, and others, be strongly influenced by different aspects of modern society. Andreas Reckwitz, for instance, observes specific (and changing) codes and practices of individuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A certain person is 'individual' only insofar as she or he makes (more or less consciously, quite often accidentally) use of leeway in composing these practices.⁴⁵

Does that mean that any distinction between modern and pre-modern 'individuality' is obsolete as well? A suggestion made by Ulrich Beck points in the direction of the argument I try to develop here:

The individual is indeed removed from traditional commitments and support relationships, but exchanges them for the constraints of existence in the labor market and as a consumer, with the standardisations and controls they contain. The place of *traditional* ties and social forms (social class, nuclear family) is taken by *secondary* agencies and institutions, which stamp the biography of the individual and make that person dependent upon fashions, social policy, economic cycles and markets, contrary to the image of individual control which establishes itself in consciousness".⁴⁶

Beck obviously has the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in mind, but it would not be unfair to expand 'traditional ties' to earlier centuries and to families, guilds, cloisters and other groups so prominent during the Middle Ages and the early modern period.

tives' would be more open and less contaminated with ideas such as 'authenticity' or 'truth'.

⁴³ Nineteenth-century autobiographies about conversion aim precisely at belonging to the new group. See A. SCHASER, "Schreiben um dazugehören: Konversionserzählungen im 19. Jahrhundert", in: *Selbstzeugnis und Person*, pp. 381-398. For autobiographies of orthodox communists, see C. JUNG, *Flucht in den Terror: Das sowjetische Exil in Autobiographien deutscher Kommunisten* (Frankfurt am Main, 2008). For competing memberships and their temporal limitations in modernity, see S. HIRSCHAUER, "Un / doing Differences: Die Kontingenz sozialer Zugehörigkeiten – Un / doing Differences: The Contingency of Social Belonging", *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 43.3 (2014), pp. 170-191.

⁴⁴ U. BECK, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (Los Angeles etc., 1992), p. 131.

⁴⁵ RECKWITZ, *Das hybride Subjekt*, pp. 47ff.

⁴⁶ U. BECK, *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), p. 211.

The discussion so far informs us that the old candidates for defining individuality do not really match the findings, not even in our days. Putting aside the somewhat romantic definition of (modern) individuality as being highly self-reflected and autonomous, the studies mentioned coin the individual and its individuality by the culture she or he lives in. Bourdieu, Beck, and Reckwitz, although using different approaches and different sources, go even a step further: It is not the inner self that brings about ‘the self’, but the given society in a given moment seems to produce the way in which people consider themselves ‘individual’:

From the cultural-theoretical point of view, the individual ... can only be imagined as a subject, i.e. as a socially-culturally modelled entity. However, this individual social-cultural entity includes idiosyncrasies. They must not be misunderstood as indicating a kind of ‘liberty’ which – in the form of a freely chosen existentialist act – separates and takes position against the social-cultural forms; rather these idiosyncrasies develop in the course of the subjective appropriation and reproduction of the form itself.⁴⁷

This is not to say that reflecting about the self and the writing of autobiographies is irrelevant. It only means that these reflections and writings take their point of departure as well as their concepts not from an imagined ‘inner self’ but from society. The basic idea as such is not at all new; in fact, it is almost as old as sociology.⁴⁸ The question is what that means for a long-term historical analysis of ‘individuality’.

⁴⁷ RECKWITZ, *Das hybride Subjekt*, p. 48: “Im kulturtheoretischen Verständnis ist der einzelne ... niemals anders denn als Subjekt, das heißt als eine sozial-kulturell modellierte Instanz denkbar. Aber diese einzelne sozial-kulturelle Instanz enthält Idiosynkrasien. Diese dürfen nicht als Kennzeichen einer ‘Freiheit’ missverstanden werden, die sich – nach Art eines existentialistischen Aktes der Wahl – separiert und gegen die sozial-kulturellen Formen positioniert; vielmehr bilden sich die Idiosynkrasien im Innern der subjektiven Aneignung und Reproduktion dieser Form selbst”.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., the classical study of G.H. MEAD, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago, 1934). One could attribute this concept, that emphasises society as a strong ‘agent’ that brings about individuality, to a *déformation professionnelle* of sociologists. Psychiatrists would probably argue in a different manner and not look at society but rather at psychological dispositions. The question is, which approach is more adequate and more beneficial to historical research?

6. *Historicising Individuality in Sociological Theory I: Georg Simmel*

In a classical study, Georg Simmel suggested an inspiring model of how society could possibly shape individuality. In every society, according to him, the single person is placed within various 'social circles' (family, work – which by themselves offer different social circles of participation –, citizenship, membership in different associations, clubs etc.). The difference between modern and pre-modern lies both in the way these circles are related to each other and in the relationship of these circles with respect to a given person.

For modernity, Simmel postulates that a single person participates in many circles that exist independently of each other and sometimes have hardly anything in common. The person, in this model, functions as a kind of intersection of these different social circles (a given student goes to a certain university, has a job downtown, holds the passport of a certain country, practices his / her religion, his / her sport, is a member of a charity organisation, goes out with friends who do not share his / her nationality nor his / her workplace ...). Modern individuality, Simmel suggests, is essentially based on a synthesis of participation in the various social circles, a synthesis that is unique already because hardly two persons participate in all the same circles. 'Individuality' as the outcome of a synthesis of various circles of life – perhaps the basic idea may be summarised this way. This synthesis again, as the thought may be continued, results at the same time in the individual's distancing from each of the circles (an aspect we will have to return to).

Concerning the Middle Ages, the sociologist assumes that either the social circles existed in parallel, side by side, without intersection by the individual, or that they were concentrically organised around the individual. Simmel gives some examples of this: university students in Bologna who wanted to be granted the citizenship of that Italian town were excluded from the university. Both university and town were 'associations' (*Genossenschaften*) that would not allow double membership. Thus we have two social circles existing parallel to each other, demanding an either / or decision by the individual, but not a synthesis. In contrast to that, the social circles of guild and city were organised concentrically, enclosing the individual. This type of 'intersection' would not demand the kind of synthesis modern society with its structures asks for. Of course, as Simmel already knew, the situation was not always that simple, and indeed, the pre-modern age also proves to be increasingly complex. Simmel discusses this and takes the medieval English royal court as an example. The

court is well known for its already very refined administration with different offices and tasks people had to perform. The tasks themselves, however, were not “sufficiently differentiated”, the author says, to demand a synthesis like that of the nineteenth century, for instance.⁴⁹

Simmel’s text has many more and different facets than can be recalled here. For instance, he refers to the fact that being located within concentric circles is found even in the modern age, just as, on the other hand, ‘overlapping’ circles may not be totally absent in the pre-modern age.⁵⁰ And there is a certain teleological bias in his writing when he thinks that the number of social circles a single person participates in could serve as a yardstick of cultural development.⁵¹ Nevertheless, his suggestion provides us with a concept of individuality that not only locates its origins within the structures of society. More than that: having different modes of ‘doing society’ in mind, his concept opens up possibilities for a more differentiated description of modern and pre-modern individuality. If we want to see a difference at all between modern and pre-modern autobiographical writings and concepts of individuality – and the very fact that the literary genre of ‘autobiography’ is a modern one makes this promising, along with much recent research that highlights ever more differences – this text makes an inspiring suggestion. Seen in the light of sociological theory, different forms of self-consciousness and self-reflection are but secondary effects, depending primarily on specific structures of society.

7. Historicising Individuality in Sociological Theory II: Niklas Luhmann

In a way, the suggestion made by Niklas Luhmann seems to be a continuation of Simmel’s concepts.⁵² His approach also assumes that it is primarily the

⁴⁹ G. SIMMEL, *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, ed. O. RAMMSTEDT (Frankfurt am Main, 1992: *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* 11), p. 475: “Indem derselbe Kreis von Personen sich zu so mannigfaltigen Amtskollegien gruppierte, ist ersichtlich eine besondere Charakteristik der Subjekte durch diese Synthese nicht gegeben: die objektiven Funktionsinhalte konnten unter solchen Umständen noch nicht hinreichend differenziert sein, um ihre Vereinigung auf den Einzelnen zur *ratio essendi* oder *cognoscendi* einer ganz individuellen Bestimmtheit zu machen”.

⁵⁰ See SIMMEL, *Soziologie*, pp. 472. and p 475.

⁵¹ SIMMEL, *Soziologie*, p. 464: “Die Zahl der verschiedenen Kreise, in denen der einzelne steht, ist einer der Gradmesser der Kultur”.

⁵² See A. NASSEHI, “Gesellschaftstheorie, Kulturphilosophie und Thanatologie: Eine gesellschaftstheoretische Rekonstruktion von Georg Simmels Theorie der Individualität”, in: *Differen-*

social structures which create the modern kind of individuality, and his approach also knows how to distinguish between pre-modern and modern kinds of individuality. However, he goes further insofar as he develops a much more differentiated image of both modern and pre-modern society and is thus able to be more precise in theorising ‘individuality’ in the named epochs and to give reasons for the observed differences.

A quick glance at how Luhmann conceptualises modern and pre-modern society is necessary. Modern society is structured by different systems: law, economy, politics, but also religion, art, family and love are portrayed as such systems, each operating by its own distinction (right and wrong in the case of law, transcendence and immanence in the case of religion, for instance). These systems should not be confused with institutions; rather, they point to spheres of communication (as clearly indicated by ‘love’) which are oriented along specific distinctions. As long as a painting is discussed in respect of its aesthetic value, communication takes place within the realm of ‘art’ (and the painting’s originality may be compared with that of a novel). As soon as the price of the painting is discussed, we are operating within the economic sphere (and its value may be compared with that of a car, for instance). While, on the one hand, it is clear that the systems may influence each other, on the other hand, due to their specific modes of distinction, they do operate independently.⁵³

This is a far too brief summary of what systems theory is about. Instead of describing the theory at length, I would like to highlight the consequences for our topic. In a functionally highly differentiated society the individual participates in each of the different systems only in the form of (limited) roles. In politics we are voters or, at best, Members of Parliament or of the government, in the economic system we are reduced to buyers or producers of goods, etc. While this echoes Simmel’s ‘social circles’, in contrast ‘systems’ are entities based on communication and are defined by the defined distinctions. What is more: Luhmann highlights that, first of all, expectations of a given person are linked to the specific role he or she has to perform, acting within the frame of a given system. True, when approaching a supermarket checkout, when talking to the owner of an art gallery, or participating in religious gatherings, it is ex-

zierungsfolgen: Beiträge zur Soziologie der Moderne, ed. A. NASSEHI, (Opladen and Wiesbaden, 1999), pp. 85-104. The ongoing PhD-Project of Katharina Hoß (Bielefeld), “Individualität und Persönlichkeitskonzepte im Spiegel spätmittelalterlicher französischer Selbstzeugnisse”, is based on the concepts of Simmel and Luhmann.

⁵³ See N. LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, trans. J. BEDNARZ, Jr., with D. BAECKER (Stanford, CA, 1995: *Writing Science*).

pected that conversation would not only deal with paying the bill, discussing the aesthetics of the pictures on the walls, or the sermons and liturgy performed. Most of the time one or two sentences about the weather, recent sports events, or private matters are expected to be exchanged on these occasions. It might even be helpful to know whether the police officer that caught you speeding is the type of person that likes a little joke or not. Conversation that focusses on roles does not exclude the person behind the role, but takes this into account as well.⁵⁴ And certainly, clothes and language, the way people dress and act, has a strong influence on how they treat each other. Nonetheless – and that is the crucial point of the argument – the overall expectations of the participants in these (and other) conversations are *not* built on the (imagined?) *general status* of the individuals involved, or on their (presumed?) membership of certain groups.⁵⁵ What is more: acting within a framework of roles makes it easier for everyone to approach others and communicate, precisely because

⁵⁴ There are – to paraphrase Armin Nassehi – a number of functional systems, which explicitly utilise the *individualised* individuality of persons. In these systems, the participants in communication are indeed approached as individuals. Nevertheless, this does not at all put into perspective the fact that the individuality of individuals itself has to be placed in the area of exclusion of society. A. NASSEHI, *Geschlossenheit und Offenheit: Studien zur Theorie der modernen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), p. 107: “In den meisten Programmen der Funktionssysteme ist Inklusion so vorgesehen, dass die Teilnehmer an Kommunikation tatsächlich als Individuen thematisiert werden, was freilich keineswegs die Diagnose relativiert, dass sich die Individualität von Individuen selbst im Exklusionsbereich der Gesellschaft verorten müsse”. See A. HAHN, “Partizipative Identität”, in: *Konstruktionen des Selbst, der Welt und der Geschichte: Aufsätze zur Kulturosoziologie*, ed. A. HAHN (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), pp. 13–79, at pp. 59 f.; E. GOFFMAN, *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior* (New Brunswick, 2008).

⁵⁵ And, getting even more specific, Luhmann illustrates (N. LUHMANN, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 2, p. 1052): “Neue [i.e. from the late eighteenth century onwards] Rollenkomplementaritäten wie Regierung / Untertan, Produzent / Konsument, Lehrer / Schüler, Arzt / Patient, Künstler / Kunstliebhaber und selbst Priester / Laie identifizieren nicht mehr konkrete Individuen, sondern nur noch Rollen nach Funktionssystemzugehörigkeit. Sie definieren nicht mehr den Sinn der Lebensführung, sondern nur noch Aufgaben und Regeln; und sie lassen auf privater wie öffentlicher, auf individueller wie auf sozialer Ebene einen Bedarf für neue, zusammenfassende Identifikationen auftreten. Darauf antworten Singularbegriffe wie (individuelles) Subjekt oder eben: Nation” (N. LUHMANN, *Theory of Society*, 2, trans. R. BARRETT (Stanford, CA, 2013: *Cultural Memory in the Present*), p. 287: “New role complementaries such as government / subject, producer / consumer, teacher / pupil, doctor / patient, artist / art lover, and even priest / layman identified people no longer as concrete individuals but only in terms of their belonging to a functional system. They no longer defined the meaning of a way of life but only tasks and rules; and at both the private and public levels, both the individual and the social levels, they engendered a need for new, summary identification. This need was met by singular concepts such as (individual) subject or nation”).

expectations and demands are limited, and the position of the people who communicate in society *in general* is not at stake.⁵⁶

This is but one side of the medal. As a consequence, society does not provide a space for the self as such.⁵⁷ The self cannot, not even for itself, insist on, for instance, being first of all a professor, or first of all a merchant, or even a family man. Ethnicity, religion, or citizenship may, up to a certain point, be considered modern helpers for creating personal identity. However, claiming to be American or German could hardly serve as a central theme for an autobiography.⁵⁸

Modern society obliges the individual person not only to synthesise different roles he or she has to perform. More important and decisive is the lack of a societal space to place the self in, so that the result of reflections and systemisations create a room of their own. Exclusion individuality does not set aside or dismiss the influence of socialisation, of family, friends, education and work. It argues that the efforts to synthesise all these (and more) influences, and the self-reflections combined with it creates a space outside society:

No longer the individual can belong to just one societal sub-system. He may be professionally committed in the economic system, in the legal system ... also, and in a certain way the social status follows the professionally determined lines of success, but it cannot exist within just one functional system. 'Society' no longer provides the individual with a place where he might exist as a 'social being'. He can only live outside society, can reproduce only as a system of his / her own within the environment of society, society providing the necessary environment. No

⁵⁶ The case of Trayvon Martin, whose skin colour and clothing seemed to have been enough 'evidence' for a private security officer to shoot him, is but a recent and extreme case (cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trayvon_Martin). The public outcry that followed went, in my view, beyond denouncing racism. At the same time it showed disapproval of a general classification of persons as a basis for communication in a given situation.

⁵⁷ NASSEHI, "Gesellschaftstheorie, Kulturphilosophie und Thanatologie", p. 96: "*Die moderne Gesellschaft zeichnet sich insbesondere dadurch aus, daß ihre innere, horizontale Differenzierungsform ein Zentrum ausschließt, von dem her die Einheit der Gesellschaft für alle verbindlich repräsentiert werden könnte*" ("Modern society is particularly characterised by its inner, horizontal differentiation rules out the existence of a centre based on which the unity of society could be bindingly represented for everybody").

⁵⁸ Discussing the importance of citizenship for identity, HAHN, "Partizipative Identität", pp. 30 ff., underlines the impossibility to include modern individuality as a whole in one system ("*die Unmöglichkeit, [die] einzigartige Individualität als ganze zum Teil eines sozialen Systems zu machen, sie als ganze zu inkludieren*", *ibid.*, p. 54). See recently HIRSCHAUER, "Un / Doing Differences".

longer [referring to pre-modern times] can the individual be defined by inclusion, but only by exclusion.⁵⁹

One consequence would be that, being obliged to create a space outside society, trying to integrate the various roles one has to perform almost ‘naturally’ ends up with a unique story about the self, a story – and that is the essential issue here – that puts a distance between society and its roles and what is conceptualised as ‘individuality’. At this point, the idea (or should we say ‘ideology’) that everybody is a unique individual steps in precisely to support the need of conceptualising ourselves as self-referential entities in opposition to society or outside it. Modern individuality as conceptualised by system theory is the consequence of a specific societal structure. That is far from celebrating any ‘discoveries’ or modern self-reflected man. Nor should we confuse exclusion individuality with autonomous individuality.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ N. LUHMANN, “Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus”, in: ID., *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik* 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), pp. 149-258, at pp. 158 f. “Die Einzelperson kann nicht mehr einem und nur einem gesellschaftlichen Teilsystem angehören. Sie kann sich beruflich / professionell im Wirtschaftssystem, im Rechtssystem ... usw. engagieren, und in gewisser Weise folgt der soziale Status den beruflich vorgezeichneten Erfolgsbahnen; aber sie kann nicht in einem Funktionssystem allein leben”. Society “bietet ... dem Einzelnen keinen Ort mehr, wo er als ‘gesellschaftliches Wesen’ existieren kann. Er kann nur außerhalb der Gesellschaft leben, nur als System eigener Art in der Umwelt der Gesellschaft sich reproduzieren, wobei für ihn die Gesellschaft eine dazu notwendige Umwelt ist. Das Individuum kann nicht mehr [referring to pre-modern times] durch Inklusion, sondern nur noch durch Exklusion definiert werden”. ID., “Die gesellschaftliche Differenzierung und das Individuum”, in: ID., *Soziologische Aufklärung* 6 (Opladen, 1995), pp. 125-141, at p. 131: “Die Umsetzung der gesellschaftlichen Systemdifferenzierung in ein sachlich und zeitlich je einmaliges Rollenmanagement – das ist der Mechanismus, der nach soziologischer Vorstellung die Individualisierung der Person erzwingt” (“The implementation of societal system differentiation happens by way of topical and chronological role management respectively – this is the mechanism which, according to sociological thought, enforces the individualisation of the person”).

⁶⁰ LUHMANN, “Individuum”, p. 52: the individual “findet sich genötigt, mit sich selbst zu kommunizieren und jene Ganzheit zu werden, die es im fragmentarischen, sprunghaften Verlauf seines eigenen Vorstellungslebens zunächst gar nicht ist. Simmel und Mead steuern hier die traditionsbildenden Formulierungen bei – und blockieren damit zugleich Rückgriffe auf transzendentaltheoretische oder auf psychologische Bewußtseinsanalysen”.

8. Comparing the Self, Conceptualising Pre-Modern Individuality

Jean Jacques Rousseau's "*Si je ne vaux pas mieux, au moins je suis autre*"⁶¹ ("If not better, at least I am different"), one of the opening phrases of the *Confessions*, expresses a turning point in conceptualising the self that is in line with what has just been said. Despite the fact that competition may be seen as a hallmark of all societies, but especially of modern society, when put to the test the individual today would rather opt for being different than being better. No doubt, we like the idea of being smarter than our neighbour, of earning more than the people next door. But at the end of the day our individuality feeds more on claiming otherness than superiority. That in itself is somewhat astonishing. Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century autobiographies seem to put this to extremes when, as mentioned above, the texts are consciously enriched even with fictional elements to get a hold on a self which is otherwise difficult to grasp.

In contrast, during the Middle Ages and even in the early modern period, as far as I can see, autobiographical texts would opt for 'being better' rather than 'being different' (the "if not better" in Rousseau's phrase echoes this concept). "Individuality, as alterity, could only mean disorder", Brigitte Bedos-Rezak states, looking at the attacks of Arnulf of Lisieux against Girard of Angoulême and Pope Anacletus,⁶² and with David Gary Shaw, who looked at late medieval English sources, one might add "social selves worked upon each other to get beyond and above each other".⁶³ Again, this does not mean a lack of self-confidence or self-esteem,⁶⁴ but rather a distinct form of 'doing individuality'. The above mentioned Thietmar gave one (very refined) example of how this is done: he excels others in being more humble and devote. Being humble was not an option for a sixteenth-century merchant like Lucas Rem, whose autobiographical text will be discussed in a moment. At this point it is enough to mention that for him being better than most of his colleagues, although he uses different means to describe this, was as important as for Thietmar.

⁶¹ ROUSSEAU, *Les confessions*, p. 5.

⁶² B. BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011: *Visualizing the Middle Ages*), p. 230.

⁶³ D.G. SHAW, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, 2005: *New Middle Ages*), p. 198.

⁶⁴ SHAW, *Necessary Conjunctions*, *ibid.*: "even quite modest social selves were authentic actors".

This is not, of course, to say that in modern autobiographies one could not find passages where the author considers him / herself better than others. Yet, the emphasis is usually on uniqueness, originality, on being different. These conceptualisations of the self are hardly to be found in pre-modern autobiographical texts – and here, again, the idea of being superior is not the same as being unlike others. ‘Being better’ establishes a relationship to the person or group one compares oneself with, while ‘being completely different’ tries to cut this relationship (although, of course, an imagined ‘opposite’ is needed in comparison with whom one could claim to be different). In this respect, uniqueness and originality are but concretisations of self-referential concepts of individuality, of an individuality that considers itself opposite to, not part of society. And this concept, to connect the argument to what has been said above, would in turn be rooted in the highly differentiated structure of modern society.

9. *A Place in Society*

The important point of our theoretical approach is the suggestion that pre-modern individuality is grounded in inclusion, and that pre-modern society would offer a specific place for the self.⁶⁵ The idea is that groups (families, households, guilds, religious orders etc. – in Luhmann’s terms: segments) work as agents of inclusion, while status is defined through the strata persons belong to. Developed by a sociologist, in the eyes of a medievalist system theory may be considered somewhat imprecise and superficial for talking about the Middle Ages.⁶⁶ But as long as the key assumptions hold and help the medievalist to understand new facets of the sources, this should not bother us too much.

One aspect of this approach that has to be discussed is, that there is only one place or group for a person to be situated in.⁶⁷ Was not everybody – even in the early Middle Ages – a member of various groups? Did not people back then have to play roles as we do today? A quick recall of Simmel’s above-men-

⁶⁵ LUHMANN, “Individuum”, pp. 157 and 160.

⁶⁶ Luhmann, for instance, puts too much weight on ‘families’ instead of other groups, and although he is aware of social mobility in pre-modern times, he does not really expand on this.

⁶⁷ Families and households function as ‘inclusion regulators’, and every individual belongs only to one such subsystem of society – which does not of course exclude social mobility (LUHMANN, “Individuum”, p. 157: “*Jedes Individuum gehört ... einem und nur einem Subsystem der Gesellschaft an*”).

tioned approach may serve as a bridge to Luhmann's idea: Simmel suggested that the relationship between the 'circles' to which everybody belongs (family, citizenship, job ...) is different in modern and in pre-modern times. While today the individual forms a kind of intersection point for very different circles which otherwise are independent of each other, the pre-modern relationship of the circles does not provide such an intersection point. Instead, they *either* form (concentric) 'rings' around a person (since a commune would enclose the guilds, and guilds households, it is no problem to be a member of all three units) *or* are placed next to each other without allowing for an intersection point (Simmel's example was that of university and town).

Simmel's description of his 'circles' shows the way towards understanding how 'place in society' can be understood. System theory will take us a bit further, because it combines 'inclusion individuality' with a distinct and more abstract concept of pre-modern society. In contrast to modern society, which is characterised as being functionally differentiated, pre-modern society is described as segmentary-stratificational. The guild, the *familia*, religious orders, etc. may be called segments, while the strata are the different layers of society. It is important that this society has an explicit hierarchy, that there is a top and a bottom and there are many in-betweens. The relationship of a given person to society is completely different from the functionally differentiated one of our times. Already the way one becomes a member of a guild or other social spheres – often in the form of a classic transition ritual – indicates that flexible differentiation of roles is not on the agenda, but rather the inclusion of the entire person into a given association.⁶⁸ And because this society is by definition a hierarchical one, together with membership of a group, by definition it offers the single person a space to place him / herself within this society.

Admittedly, this description of medieval or early modern times looks somewhat simplistic. Do our sociologists not underestimate the complexity of medieval society? Is it not the case that people were forced to take roles and be as flexible as we are, quickly adapting to the changing circumstances we are confronted with every day? And is a (fixed) hierarchy not a nineteenth-century myth, while quite often not even kings and popes were honoured and accepted as Hollywood movies would like them to be?

⁶⁸ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* 2, p. 622: somewhere one was "durch Geburt oder Aufnahme [in einen Personenverband] zu Hause".

Before discussing this in more detail, I would like to seize on an observation made by Max Weber. He states that pre-modern membership in formal as well as informal groups was based on ‘status contracts’:

The distinction [to the modern purposive contract (=Zweck-Kontrakt)] is based on the fact that all those primitive contracts by which political or other personal associations, permanent or temporary, or family relations are created involve a change in what may be called the total legal situation (the universal position) and the social status of the persons involved. ... For a long time their symbolism retained traces of that character, and the majority of these contracts are ‘fraternisation contracts’ (*Verbrüderungsverträge*). By means of such a contract a person was to become somebody’s child, father, wife, brother, master, slave, kin, comrade-in-arms, ... vassal, subject, friend, or, quite generally, comrade (*Genosse*). To ‘fraternise’ with another person did not, however, mean that a certain performance of the contract, contributing to the attainment of some specific object, was reciprocally guaranteed or expected. ... The contract rather meant that the person would ‘become’ something different in quality (or status) from the quality he possessed before. For unless a person voluntarily assumed that new quality, his future conduct in his new role could hardly be believed to be possible at all. Each party must thus make a new ‘soul’ enter his body.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ M. WEBER, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundrisse der verstehenden Soziologie*, ed. J. WINCKELMANN (Tübingen, 1980), p. 401: “Alle jene urwüchsigen Kontrakte, durch welche z.B. politische oder andere persönliche Verbände, dauernde oder zeitweilige, oder Familienbeziehungen geschaffen wurden, hatten zum Inhalt eine Veränderung der rechtlichen Gesamtqualität, der universellen Stellung und des sozialen Habitus von Personen. Und zwar sind sie, um dies bewirken zu können, ursprünglich ausnahmslos entweder direkt magische oder doch irgendwie magisch bedeutsame Akte und behalten Reste dieses Charakters in ihrer Symbolik noch lange bei. Die Mehrzahl von ihnen ... sind ‘Verbrüderungsverträge’. Jemand soll fortan Kind, Vater, Frau, Bruder, Herr, Sklave, Sippen-genosse, Kampfgenosse, Schutzherr, Klient, Gefolgsmann, Vasall, Untertan, Freund, mit dem weitesten Ausdruck: ‘Genosse’, eines anderen werden. Sich derart miteinander ‘Verbrüdern’ aber heißt nicht: daß man sich gegenseitig für konkrete Zwecke nutzbare Leistungen gewährt oder in Aussicht stellt, auch nicht nur, wie wir es ausdrücken würden: daß man fortan ein neues, in bestimmter Art sinnhaft qualifiziertes Gesamtverhalten zueinander in Aussicht stellt, sondern: daß man etwas qualitativ anderes ‘wird’ als bisher, – denn sonst wäre jenes neue Verhalten gar nicht möglich. Die Beteiligten müssen eine andere ‘Seele’ in sich einziehen lassen”. ‘Verbrüderung’ und ‘Statuskontrakt’ wird so dem ‘Zweckkontrakt’ gegenübergestellt, der auf Geld- und Marktwirtschaft basierend jeweils nur ausdifferenzierte Teilbereiche des Handelns einer Person erfasst, jedenfalls keine allgemeine Statusänderung herbeiführt”; trans. M. WEBER, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. G. ROTH et al. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1968), p. 672.

Two things are important to note. First, Weber's 'status contract' does not, like Tönnies' 'communal relationships' (*Vergemeinschaftung*),⁷⁰ emphasise emotions as the basis of pre-modern society. Rather, he points to the legal dimension of the phenomenon. In its forms and results, pre-modern 'membership' differs strongly from modern concepts, even from that of citizenship ("the person would 'become' something different in quality"). Secondly, Weber, although taking a different view at society, clarifies why 'membership' or 'socialisation' takes on a different meaning in pre-modern times. This reason matches Luhmann's concept of a society that provides a space for a person to be placed in.

Metaphors like 'place' and 'space' can now be clarified according to Weber's description of pre-modern 'membership'. Having one place in society instead of participating only as 'role players' in different spheres does not mean, of course, that a duke, a monk, let alone the citizens of a town would not have to differentiate their *behaviour* according to particular situations. The main point is not 'flexibility of behaviour' but what *essentially* generates the *expectations* of the participants in a given situation towards each other. While in pre-modern times expectations are related *predominantly* to the overall status of a person, his / her rank and his / her 'membership' of a family or community, in modern times these expectations are connected *predominantly* to circumstances and functional societal spheres, and thus to the role he or she has to play in a given environment (job, shopping centre ...).⁷¹

The essence of the sociology discussed so far identifies great differences in the relationship between single persons and groups or societies in modern and pre-modern times respectively. Weber and Simmel argue, in my view, in the same direction as Luhmann. Circles, fraternity contracts, inclusion individuality, to name only the catchwords – does that mean that people were tied to

⁷⁰ F. TÖNNIES, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Abhandlungen des Communismus und Socialismus als empirischer Culturformen* (Darmstadt, 1972); Weber has a similar concept of *Vergemeinschaftung*, which is – and that is interesting – not employed here: WEBER, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 21 f. A good overview of the concept of *Vergemeinschaftung*, which, in my view, tells us more about the nineteenth century than about the Middle Ages, is provided by *Theorien der Gemeinschaft zur Einführung*, ed. L. GERTENBACH *et al.* (Hamburg, 2010).

⁷¹ "Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men", as GOFFMAN, *Interaction Ritual*, p. 3, sums up the results of his classical studies. For the divers concepts of multiple membership given in ethnological, political and sociological research see HIRSCHAUER, "Un/Doing Differences". Hirschauer himself, after having given a sound overview, underlines that the importance of nationality, ethnicity, gender, race, class background, age, etc. varies with the (personal and institutional) situation one is in.

their memberships? Do these sociologists not tell the same story already told by Jacob Burckhardt, just in a different wording? And is Luhmann's strong abstraction not a hindrance rather than a help when dealing with concrete sources?

Inclusion individuality, so much is clear, does not point to any emotional components or psychological categories. 'Membership' of a given segment is conceptualised from the viewpoint of society: the household, family, or guild functions as a gatekeeper for inclusion in society (again: modern society includes not via segments but via functional systems, and only in the form of roles, which marks the difference). While this structure, on the one hand, has very concrete consequences for the way autobiographical text are written (and with it, one may presume, for the way the self is conceptualised), that does not mean, on the other hand, that these texts exclusively write about the membership of a concrete *group*. Their overall aim seems to confirm that the given person has his / her place in *society*. The core issue has always been presenting a self that was included in a social world that was part of society.⁷²

10. Inclusion Individuality – Thietmar of Merseburg and Lucas Rem

'Inclusion individuality' and 'place in society' are broad concepts that allow for many different ways to spell them out. The strategies are manifold, creative, often unique and 'individual'. Having said that, I would like to name two of them, prominent in most of the texts I have looked at (and most of the time combined). One strategy was to portray the self as fulfilling or over-fulfilling norms. The other is showing the author's (many) relations with other living or dead persons, 'embedding' him in social contexts.

An example of the first strategy – overdoing norms – has been given above already. The text by Thietmar of Merseburg operates in this way, when he says that he is "dissimilar" (*"longe dissimilis"*) to the noblemen he knows and when he describes himself as being most ugly and most sinful. While he is very detailed about his body and his character, it is not clear to whom he considers himself *"longe dissimilis"*. Other bishops? Other monks? Or is his physical

⁷² This is even true for Abelard. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "Petrus Abaelardus als Kronzeuge der 'Individualität' im 12. Jahrhundert? Einige Fragen", in: *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz: Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur*, ed. C. DARTMANN et al. (Turnhout, 2011: *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 18), pp. 165-198, at pp. 169 ff.

ugliness a contrast to the beautiful nobility? He can be vague in this respect because in essence, rather than having concrete persons in mind, he is drawing on general norms of the elite of his age which, for instance, order one to proclaim to be humble and see the connection of virtue and beauty as a given.⁷³ But Thietmar is trying to go beyond the average when he speaks of himself as a “glutton and a hypocrite, greedy and disparaging” (and, no wonder, the opposite virtues to these vices were the central values of his time) and concludes: “I am much worse than one can possibly say”.⁷⁴ Taking the *humiliatio-exaltatio* model to extremes (and he is not different from many many others in doing so), he tries to do just this: overdoing norms.

This ‘overdoing’ had two effects. First, it would provide our bishop a top rank among his contemporaries – but that is of lesser interest here. Secondly, this form of comparing oneself with norms in terms of outbidding still links the person to these very norms – and in doing so gives him a prominent place in that society. In this respect, the person gains ‘uniqueness’ by outbidding others in over-fulfilling central categories of a not-yet-clear peer group or of society as such. And he would gain ‘individuality’ in its pre-modern form by the way he procures this with an exceptional story and by how he narrates it. Does that fall short of modern self-descriptions? If ‘otherness’ is on the agenda today, then ignoring or breaking norms where others would observe them, and respecting them where others would possibly break them, becomes an icon of autobiographical story-telling. And this modern strategy is not at all ‘individual’.

Before turning to the second strategy, ‘embedding’ the author in social contexts, it has to be said that in most texts both strategies can be found. For Thietmar, one central *causa scribendi* of his *Chronicle*, as Gerd Althoff and others have already found out, is memory. On the one hand that of the relatives and episcopal colleagues he mentions – and here he does give names. On the other hand, the book as a whole is aimed to support the memory of Thietmar himself.⁷⁵ Thus, many relationships of different intensity and various forms are

⁷³ It is interesting to note, however, that Thietmar is not using the much stronger term *difformitas* for his self-description, which was used in invectives of the time and had the potential to almost destroy the social existence of a person. For this term and for an inspiring discussion of physical appearance and individuality see BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego was Imago*, pp. 229 f. Guibert of Nogent has an interesting passage on beauty in *Monodiae* 1, 3; see ARLINGHAUS, “In and out, then and now”.

⁷⁴ See *supra*, n. 1.

⁷⁵ G. ALTHOFF, *Adels- und Königsfamilien im Spiegel ihrer Memorialüberlieferung: Studien*

part of our bishop's book, and while these relations do not establish a concrete group, through it he did 'embed' himself in society.

Roughly four hundred years later, living in a completely different environment, an Augsburg merchant called Lucas Rem (1481-1541) still used the same strategies in his 'family book', although in a very different manner. Lucas, being part of the urban elite of his home town and working for the famous Welser company before he founded a company himself, wrote his autobiographical text during the first decades of the sixteenth century, continuing them until the year before his death.⁷⁶ In his 'diary', as the editor called it in 1861, he wrote about his ancestors, about his many travels, reported the costs of the weddings of his children, and a lot of other things. One core element is formed by his business activities. That he is a better merchant than his colleagues is emphasised especially when he elaborates on his expertise in bookkeeping. Rem was to help Anton Lauginger, a representative of the Welser in Milan, who was "lost" (*"verirt"*) in his accounts. Finding a solution here brought him "luck and great praise."⁷⁷ Likewise, he adjusted the accounts of the Welser agency in Fribourg (Switzerland), where the local merchants were "completely lost" (*"gar verwirt"*) in their balancing of the books.⁷⁸ In episodes like these the 'being better' concept is obvious, but our merchant, different from Thietmar, sees no need for acting the humble servant. It is important to note that bookkeeping, especially double-entry bookkeeping, at that time was more than just a business tool. Upper German merchants around 1500 went to Italy, especially to Venice, to learn that refined method, and Lucas was no exception to the rule, as we learn from his family book.⁷⁹

While writing about his life – and the short notes rather resemble entries in an account book than an autobiographical text – he constantly mentions people he stayed with, or did business with, or simply met while travelling. In terms of name dropping the merchant outdoes our bishop easily. What is more: Lucas's

zum Totengedenken der Billunger und Ottonen (Munich, 1984: *Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften* 47), p. 235; for a brief summary of the discussion, see recently PATZOLD, "Nachtrag", pp. XLIV ff.

⁷⁶ The 1861 edition of B. GREIFF, "Tagebuch des Lucas Rem aus den Jahren 1494-1541: Ein Beitrag zur Handelsgeschichte der Stadt Augsburg", in: *Sechszwanzigster Jahres-Bericht des historischen Kreis-Vereins im Regierungsbezirke von Schwaben und Neuburg für das Jahr 1860* (Augsburg, 1861), pp. 1-110, is still useful.

⁷⁷ GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 6: "*Adj 2 febr. kam in der Comp^a haus zuo Anton Lauginger. Der was in seyner rechnong verirt, daraus Ich Im halff unds krecht fandt, des mir zuo fil gluck und fudrong halff*".

⁷⁸ GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 16.

⁷⁹ GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 5.

text offers various forms of social relations the protagonist took part in. Some of the merchant colleagues he worked with or simply met on his innumerable journeys were probably foreign merchants;⁸⁰ most of them came from Augsburg or collaborated, in one way or the other, with the big Augsburg merchant companies, especially the Welser.⁸¹ Since he had a controversy with precisely this company – and this is an issue in his book – it is telling how strongly he emphasised his doings and his importance for the work of that company.

Lucas Rem started writing a family book,⁸² and by this alone contributed to creating a restricted group – his family – he considers to be part (and head) of. The description of his forefather Hans Rem, born in 1340, 140 years before Lucas, is a story from rag to riches – but with special features. In 1357 Hans, presumably seventeen years old, sold everything he had, and with the 500 guilders gained in this way started trading. On his first journey to Venice he lost 100 guilders, but that did not scare him off: he invested the rest and travelled to and fro between Augsburg and Venice, and despite robberies and other hardships, by God's grace and a lot of luck made a fortune.⁸³ More than about success, this story is about a perfect merchant who performed his business no matter what obstacles he encountered and who, as it happened, was the founder of the Rem family. By the time of Hans Rem, Lucas's grandfather, the normative and the social not coincidentally merge into one.

While business transactions, dowries, weddings, etc. are prominent in the book, other aspects – from a modern perspective – fall short. Our author is

⁸⁰ Besides the names of Jer^o Delanave and Guido d'Angelo in Venice and Piero Deburg in Lyon, where he staid as a young man to learn the local languages (and in Italy probably bookkeeping); see GREIFF, "Tagebuch", pp. 5-6, and the following pages, e.g. p. 8, of the edition for more names (Jan Buchly de Metlin, Cesaro Berzi in Valencia (Spain), Julian Jocunda in Lisbon ...).

⁸¹ GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 12: "*adi. 23 dito kam ich gen Äntorff. Fand alda Conrat Imhoff, Ulrico Honolt, Bartolomeo Welser*"; *ibid.*, p. 21: "*... kam adi 1 Ottobrio morgens gen Antorff. Da ritt ich bey Juan Gabriel Bongarten ein, der mich on al mas wol, erlich, wohlfail hoult*"; and *passim*.

⁸² An excellent overview of the genre is given by *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. B. STUDDT (Cologne and Weimar, 2007: *Städteforschung A* 69). Tuscan family books, *libri di famiglia*, are much better known than the German ones; see G. CIAPPELLI, *Memory, Family, and Self: Tuscan Family Books and Other European Egodocuments (14th-18th Century)* (Leiden, 2014).

⁸³ After informing briefly about Hans' birth in 1340 and his marriage in 1365, Lucas writes: "*Gemelter mein anher verkauffett im 1357 Jar als wz er hett, und machett bey 500 gulden In als. Fong darmit an zuo handeln. Ynd an der ersten Rais gen Venedig verlor er an waren hinein 100 gulden. Rest leget err an, 400 gulden, damit er hie aussen wol gwan. Fuor wider hinein, und also hin und her. Gab gott gnad, und gros gluk, gewin ...*" (GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 1).

already fifteen years old when his father passes away, and his entry on this event could not be more brief. “On 3 August 1496 my father died, *ganz ge-schikt in got*. God give him eternal rest”. True, in general, but not always, the notes in the family book are short, but this event would, in our view, have deserved more attention. What is more, this short entry is followed by naming the children of the deceased – and the legacy in land and assets.⁸⁴ For a modern reader, even in the context of a family book, Lucas has the wrong priorities. Every now and then, however, he gets more comprehensive and even emotional. Once, on a business journey, Lucas Rem’s horse, going downhill, stumbled, fell, and overturned so that the saddle cracked and, he added, it was a miracle that he survived and was not hurt. “And I may say that this day I was born again”, he concluded.⁸⁵ In another entry he almost turns into a storyteller when reporting about his apprenticeship in Lyon in the house of Piero Deburg. The latter’s wife being stingy, Lucas and his colleagues did not even get enough to eat. He added: “but a ream of paper would not be enough to write about the ploys and thefts we resorted to to get food and wine”.⁸⁶

Although many-faceted – and much more could be said about this book⁸⁷ – the autobiographical text develops clear-cut strategies to assign his author a concrete position in the social world of his time. Different stages of group-affiliations – the wider mercantile elite of his hometown, his family portrayed as a generations of tradesman – give unmistakable indications of how he wanted to be seen. In terms of storytelling and the content of his book, it is not so much about his profession as about how the late medieval urban elite saw itself, and about how an individual wanted to obtain a prominent place within

⁸⁴ GREIFF, “Tagebuch”, p. 2: “*Adj 3. Aug° 1496 vergieng mein vatter mit dodit, ganz ge-schikt in gott. Der verleicht Im und uns alen die ewig ruo. Hatt verlassen seine kinder: Endris, Lucas, Hans, Gilg, Örg, Madlena. Noch ain dochter, Kattarina, ist vor Im dodit. Hat Uns gelassen Riethaym, ward verkafft um 8200 gulden, seyne heysser hie, und in Hans Vechlin Gesellschaft 4500 gulden, hausratt, silbergeschir, claynett etc. etc.*”.

⁸⁵ GREIFF, “Tagebuch”, p. 14: “*An Seta. Cattarina tag wolt Ich von Alvalada gen Sct. Cattarina reitten und fuol mir mein ros am kraden berg ab. fuol das ros auf’n rucken, den satel zuo sticklert – überschluog sich. Ich kam wunderperlich darvon, on al laid. Also mag ich sagen, ditz tag erst niu geporn sey*”.

⁸⁶ GREIFF, “Tagebuch”, p. 6: “*Von 19 bis 29 Julio war Ich in der Comp^a dienst. Und bey genanntem Piero Deburg, het 3 brieder gewachsener bey Im, die al mein heren wasen, lidt mich 13 monet on Mas fil, insonder mit össen, trinken. Seyns weibs karkeyt (Anm. 33 Geiz) het kain mas. Aber ain Ris bapeir wer fol zuo schreiben, der listikait wir trieben mit esendt ding und wein, wir stalen. On des hetten wir al eehalten nit kinden gedulden*”.

⁸⁷ His illnesses and their treatment in spas (where he kept precise accounts of the number of baths he took) would be but one of a number of interesting topics.

that elite. The perils he masters, sometimes with luck (his horse accident), sometimes with wits (the hardship suffered as an apprentice), fit, notwithstanding all variety, all too well with the merchant's life, and many of his colleagues could surely tell similar stories. That no feelings about the death of his father are articulated, but the inheritance is carefully registered, should not be read as coldness of heart or a specific mercantile mentality.⁸⁸ Rather, it is in line with the general plot of the life story he does not want to have diluted.

"This is the record (*verzeichnis*) of Lucas Rem's whole life, all his doings to set an example (*ein Exempel*) of virtue for his descendants, so that they turn to diligence and prudence (*Fürsichtigkeit*) and to turn away from dissolute useless things, eating, drinking, gambling ... so they might spend their time with virtuous doings ...".⁸⁹ It was a grandson who, using a free page in the book, commented like this on Lucas's writings. That he is thought to be an "example of virtue" only holds with respect to the specific merchant / urban elite values. He does not, for instance, emphasise learning – except bookkeeping –, as humanists like Willibald Pirckheimer would do,⁹⁰ and self-humiliation or piety, as Thietmar did, are not on the agenda either. Nevertheless, in the eyes of his grandson, like him a citizen of Augsburg and a merchant, Lucas seemed to have struck the right cords.

It should not be overlooked, however, that the content is only part of what Lucas's writing offers. The above-mentioned 'personnel' of his text – merchants of foreign countries and of his home town as well as members of his family – are at least as important. Both groups, colleagues and family, are actively put in place by the author; and both groups form an essential part in the build-up of Lucas's individuality. A member of the merchant elite is some-

⁸⁸ I learned much from Christian Bec's classical study of Italian *libri di famiglia*, but have difficulties to see a mercantile or capitalist mentality at work; see C. BEC, *Les marchands écrivains: Affaires et humanisme à Florence 1375-1434* (Paris and The Hague, 1967: *Civilisations et Sociétés* 9), p. 437.

⁸⁹ GREIFF, "Tagebuch", p. 3: "Lucas Remen dess III verzaichnis seines gantzen lebens, thun und lassens darob seine nachkumne ein Exempel der tugend nemen können, damit sy sich zu Fleiss und Fürsichtigkeit gewenen, darneben sich von liederlichen unnütz ding, essen, trinken, spilen, pracht enthalten, welches leichtiglich geschicht, so sy dem anfang wehren und in nutzlichen tugentlichen sachen ir kurtzweil suoehen und damit die zeit zuobringen".

⁹⁰ The family he was born in, wrote Willibald Pirckheimer in his 'autobiography', was decorated with many very learned men and even women: "Ex hac igitur familia clara et antiqua Bilibaldus Pirckheimerus natus est ... ut quam plurimis ornata fuerit uiris, immo mulieribus etiam doctissimis" (W. PIRCKHEIMER, *Der Schweizerkrieg: De bello Suitense sive Eluetico: In lateinischer und deutscher Sprache: Neu übersetzt und kommentiert von Fritz Wille* (Baden, 1998), pp. 142 ff.).

one – to adapt a phrase by Harald Müller coined for humanists of that time⁹¹ – who is in contact with other merchants of the urban elite. Lucas Rem, besides his virtues, documented this by name dropping and mentioning who of the family had married whom. Together with the ‘qualities’, Lucas characterises himself as an exponent of a certain ‘group’, and as someone who in most ways performs better than the rest. This is a conscious reflection which merges belonging, status, merits, personality and individuality into a single elaboration on the position in society he had – as far as possible – chosen to be his.

11. Pre-modern Strategies of ‘Placing’

Four and a half centuries separate Thietmar of Merseburg and Lucas Rem, and not only this huge time span seems to make any connection impossible. A bishop in his palace here and an urban merchant there, a historiographer here, who almost in passing informs us about himself, a father there whose life story forms part of a family myth – the list of differences certainly does not end here. No wonder that the way in which both reflect on themselves is in many points quite different. Autobiographical texts of the twelfth and early sixteenth centuries differ in many respects and clearly show that self-descriptions had changed in many ways in the course of the long centuries between the Middle Ages and the early modern epoch. But they do have in common an enormous degree of self-esteem, self-consciousness and self-reflection. Neither Thietmar nor Lucas were “dreaming or half awake”, as Jacob Burckhardt would have it,⁹² when

⁹¹ H. MÜLLER, *Habit und Habitus: Mönche und Humanisten im Dialog* (Tübingen, 2006: *Spätmittelalter und Reformation*, N.R. 24), p. 77: “Humanist ist, wer mit anderen Humanisten im Gespräch ist und bleibt. Der Zugang über die Vernetzung in Form von Briefkontakten trägt dabei den bislang noch nicht ausgeschöpften Erkenntnismöglichkeiten, welche die Korrespondenzen in inhaltlicher und sozialgeschichtlicher Hinsicht für dieses Thema bietet, ebenso Rechnung wie der Schwierigkeit einer kohärenten inhaltlichen und formalen Bestimmung des Humanismus selbst. Erst dahinter rangiert der Blick auf den Inhalt. Er ist gleichwohl von eminenter Bedeutung, denn erst ein spezifisches thematisches Profil macht einen Briefwechsel zur Humanistenkorrespondenz” (“A humanist is someone who talks and continues to talk with other humanists. Access by way of networking in the form of correspondence takes into consideration the as yet unexhausted cognitive possibilities provided by correspondence when it comes to topical aspects and those of social history, just as the difficulties of a coherent topical and formal definition of humanism itself. Only then the view is on content. Nevertheless, the latter is of outstanding significance, for only it makes an exchange of letters a humanist correspondence”).

⁹² BURCKHARDT, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 98.

reflecting about their selves; in respect of self-consciousness they do not differ too much from what we find in modern autobiographies.

However, both texts are different – and this is a crucial point – from modern self-descriptions by the way in which self-consciousness is anchored, by what it is based on and by how it is expressed. Thietmar and Lucas placed themselves at the heart of society instead of external to it, and both seem to use strategies that resemble each other's, although with different emphasis. One strategy is dropping names or comparing themselves with other persons they consider vital for their 'placing'. Lucas's mentioning of the merchants he has met on his travels or merely has done business with fits perfectly well in that picture. Thietmar, being preoccupied with the memory of deceased friends and monks,⁹³ entrusts his own memory to the reader,⁹⁴ although he establishes relationships of various kinds in his text. Calling this carefully chosen personnel a 'group' would not be adequate, but they indicate precisely how the authors of the texts wanted to be seen, to which people they wanted to be related.

That resembles what some literary studies especially of the early modern period label 'heterologous writing', meaning that pre-modern autobiographical texts establish a relationship to other persons and the world as such in order to get hold of the author's self.⁹⁵ While the empirical side matches much (but not

⁹³ H.-G. LIPPELT, *Thietmar von Merseburg: Reichsbischof und Chronist* (Cologne and Vienna, 1973: *Mitteldeutsche Forschungen* 72), pp. 201 f., stated, that Thietmar transferred the institutionalised memory of the Merseburg necrology into a chronicle. For a systematic analysis, see ALTHOFF, *Adels- und Königsfamilien*, p. 228 ff.

⁹⁴ Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VIII, 16, ed. TRILLMICH, p. 458: "*Et haec idcirco dixi, ut tu, lector, mortalitate ac innata humanitate mihi consimilis in hoc consensu me graviter peccasse scias et amminiculis indeficientibus succurras*".

⁹⁵ E. KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott: Autobiographik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2004: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 13), p. 300: "*Eine heterologe Subjektivität zeigt sich ... nicht in einer ausschweifenden Darstellung der eigenen Person und des eigenen Innenlebens, sondern dadurch, daß in erster Linie nicht Eigenes, sondern anderes dargestellt wird. Sie entsteht, wenn die eigene Person bezogen wird auf eine Gruppe ... oder auf Dinge oder Ereignisse in der Welt, mit denen man sich verbunden sieht. Erkennt man die Möglichkeit solch heterologer Subjektivität ... gelten Darstellungen von Gott und Welt in autobiographischen Texten nicht mehr zwangsläufig als Indiz für eine unzureichende Scheidung der eigenen Person von ihrer Umgebung und müssen Schilderungen von Gott und Welt, von religiösen und politischen Fragen, nicht mehr als bloße, erzähltechnische Zutat gewertet werden*" ("Heterologous subjectivity becomes obvious ... not by widely elaborating on one's own personality and one's own inner life but by presenting not first of all one's own but other things. It is created if one's own personality is referred to a group ... or to things or events in the world which one feels being connected to. If one recognises the possibility of such a heterologous subjectivity ... no longer depictions of God and world in autobiographical texts are necessarily considered an indication of insufficiently separating one's own person from

all) of what has been discussed above; ‘inclusion individuality’, on the other hand, offers an explanation for this when linking the phenomenon to structures of society, and the concept is, in my view, more precise and more abstract at the same time. By this approach, other important traits of medieval autobiographical texts can be detected as contributions to ‘individuality’ as well. This is true for the above mentioned second strategy: to over-fulfil the norms the writer considers important for his identity. Although we find this in Lucas’s writings as well, Thietmar with his rhetoric of humbleness is a wonderful example. The two strategies – overdoing norms and establishing a social environment – are present in both texts, but with different priorities. Both can be identified as concrete forms or practices of ‘placing’ which do not draw on emotions or forming identities in the way that, for instance, modern nation states with their parades and pathetic rhetoric were to do later on.

12. A Kind of Conclusion

The sociological concept of ‘membership’ and ‘inclusion individuality’ described above assigns a person to one concrete group: on the one hand, it is the ‘segment’ that includes (or excludes) a person; on the other hand, this person draws on this segment when reflecting about his / her self. While the argument developed here is based on this theory, when looking at Thietmar’s and Lucas’s texts this picture needs a little modification. The way pre-modern self-descriptions ‘work’, their basic strategies, can be attributed to the suggestions made by the system theory’s approach. However, in many ways the texts have a wider scope. For the two protagonists, when reflecting on themselves, ‘membership’ means first and foremost ‘membership (or inclusion) in society’, and pre-modern individuality, from the perspective of the authors of autobiographical starts out from there, is based on this inclusion. So there is a difference between the premordial inclusion of a given person, that is in fact performed by certain groups, and the self-descriptions of authors like Thietmar and Lucas. This opens up the possibility – and here the paper goes one step further than

its environment, and not necessarily depictions of God and world, of religious and political issues must be considered just narrative-technical additions”. See also EAD., “Hetero-reference and heterology: Autobiographical writing, individuality, and gender on the threshold of the modern period”, in this volume. For a discussion of the concept see also V. OLEJNICZAK, “Heterologie: Konturen frühneuzeitlichen Selbstseins jenseits von Autonomie und Heteronomie”, *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 101 (1996), pp. 6-37.

the theory on offer – that through their autobiographical texts people form their own groups, more or less related to the concrete groups they are part of, to define their place in society and, in this way, to work on their individuality.

The growing number of autobiographical texts, the very fact that the ‘self goes literacy’, clearly points to a growing hiatus between the membership concept and the concepts of the self as they are displayed in these writings. On the one hand, the specific space offered has a strong impact on the self and the literacy of the self. On the other hand, self-descriptions not only refer to concrete groups that could be named but also take into consideration estates and bigger social entities that were far from being concrete. The concept of inclusion individuality, taken seriously, means precisely this: persons refer to a position in *society* to create their self-consciousness, their ‘individuality’; group ties, although they might play an important role, are quite another matter.

With creativity and even originality Thietmar and Lucas elaborated on ‘individuality’ as their specific place in society – and, no wonder, claimed a prominent one, superior to that of most others. In this respect they differ from most modern autobiographies which emphasise the author’s (presumed) distance to society, and in this way do not so much proclaim superiority but otherness. By linking how people reflect and write about themselves to basic structures of society, as has been done here in line with sociological research, telling stories about ‘liberation’ – be it from group ties or, in a modified version, from societal bonds – would not match the findings. Taking a bird’s eye view, the limits of expression between modern and pre-modern individuality resemble each other more than some would like them to. While the task of pre-modern people to express their individuality is to describe themselves as being similar or better than others and, in this way, as part of society, to explore their positions and elaborate on their place, modern individuality wants us to be distinct from everybody else and place ourselves outside society. Limits and demands, although of different kinds, here and there, and while all autobiographical texts, modern as well as pre-modern, may claim uniqueness, they do share the underlying concepts they draw on with most other texts of their epoch.

But there are not only limits. While on the one hand a given society obviously provides autobiographical texts with basic concepts of how to portray the self, within the coordinates of these basic concepts there are many possibilities and many ways of writing and reflecting on the self. It is in itself fascinating to see how different and with how much creativity pre-modern authors deal with

these concepts. And the same, of course, is true for modern autobiographies. It is fascinating to see how, within an abstract societal frame, the ways of writing and reflecting about the self may change almost from decade to decade.

13. *The Contributions*

The ten articles of this volume are the outcome of a conference held in Bielefeld in 2009. The aim of the conference and of the volume was to discuss the theoretical approach just outlined. I would like to thank all contributors for the very lively and inspiring discussion we had during our meeting. Knowing about the difficulties in getting one's mind around system theory, I am very grateful that all authors reflect on the suggested theoretical framework. That does not mean, of course, that all subscribe to what has been proposed. Instead, the opinions expressed a range from 'yes, but' via 'maybe' to 'no, impossible'.

How would a seventeenth-century married woman, who left her family and her country to follow her husband, conceptualise her 'self'? Mareike Böth, analysing the letters of Elisabeth Charlotte, who was born in Heidelberg as the daughter of an Elector Palatine and was married to the brother of Louis XIV, explains that an aristocratic stomach, if it is of German origin, does not like French cuisine. For Elisabeth Charlotte (or Liselotte), a strong 'German' diet was part of a body regime that included a lot of fresh air, exercise and intensive hunting. With all this, as Mareike Böth argues, she consciously distanced herself from the seventeenth-century French court and even from her husband, deliberately performing her individuality almost exclusively by linking herself to her family and land of origin.

Drawing on a great variety of mainly high medieval sources, Brigitte Bedos-Rezak sees more similarities than differences between *post*-modern and medieval concepts of individuality. In this respect, she considers that the strong binary framework of systems theory that opposes inclusion and exclusion individuality is somewhat simplistic as it ignores the "wide range of variables which arise from analyses of both periodisation and the experiences of individuality". Furthermore, in her opinion, the approach advocated by systems theory "tends to support the teleological and evolutionary impulse that sees the individual as a progressive outcome". Brigitte Bedos-Rezak's general thesis is that in both epochs, medieval and postmodern, "... the experience of individuality is ... that of an excluded, partial being who seeks completeness by means of

social inclusion". She furthermore underlines the high degree of medieval self-awareness and distinction by considering theological discussions and by analysing the ways that the pronoun 'ego' was used in documents. With reference to the seals, markers of identity which were 'individualised' on the reverse by fingerprints or the inclusion of hair, and engraved on the reverse with conventional pictures, she argues that, at least in this case, stereotyping was an effect of the seals's mode of signification, not of the concept of pre-modern individuality as such.

Eva Kormann takes us back to early modern autobiographical texts. Discussing the concepts of inclusion individuality and hetero-reference – a concept that resembles inclusion individuality in many ways – in self-descriptions, she first of all highlights the differences between Burckhardt and Luhmann. In contrast to the Swiss historian, who sees a "nebulous melting of the 'I' into the 'we'", the Westphalian sociologist suggests that pre-modern forms of individuality are "unable to dispense with the attachment to God and the surrounding world". The term she uses for this kind of 'autobiography' is 'heterologous subjectivity'. Like 'inclusion individuality', this does not per se rule out concepts of 'uniqueness' in autobiographical texts. From her perspective as a literary scholar, by a side glance, Eva Kormann discusses the self-referentiality of modern autobiographies. Against this background and with a look at the writings of women, she is able to develop a differentiated picture of the role of 'gender' for autobiographies.

"There is no sign of a particular group to which Hoccleve thought he needed to adhere" is one of the central phrases in David Gary Shaw's paper. After outlining Luhmann's concept of individuality within systems theory, he discusses whether the "transition from medieval to modern in terms of the individual's relation to society was underway in fifteenth-century England". His study draws on two interesting fifteenth-century figures: the poet and bureaucrat Thomas Hoccleve and the scholar and traveller William Worcestre. According to Shaw, in Hoccleve and Worcestre we find a kind of "individuality in transition", "moving from social integration through stratification towards modernity's weak integration through functional differentiation", which he sees in agreement with the beginning of functional differentiation in late medieval society.

Gabriele Jancke takes us to sixteenth-century Zurich, where Konrad Pellikan, Professor of Old Testament Studies, wrote an autobiographical text about his life. Discussing the approach suggested by the conference, she considers

the possibilities offered by the theory to historicise individuality. Furthermore, the suggestions made by systems theory are, in her view, in line with the way in which Caroline Walker Bynum and Natalie Zemon Davis described individuality in the context of group cultures. In her own interpretation of Konrad Pellikan's *Chronicon* his 'household', as part of a group culture, plays an important role. However, Gabriele Jancke criticises the strong dichotomy by which this theory conceptualises modern and pre-modern societies and the two forms of individuality related to those epochs, and denounces the approach as, in her view, being too close to early nineteenth-century concepts of autonomous individuality. Relying on a refined version of Marcel Mauss's notion of 'person' as a category and on actor-network-theory, she supports a concept that would take more categories, especially spaces and boundaries of the self, into consideration.

"So, in the end, I might have to ask myself if individuality is not an alien concept to my discipline", the literary scholar Matthias Meyer asks, referring to the difference between literary characters and real-life individuals. The solution he offers is to define the 'literary character' as being composed of three components: mimetic, topical, and artificial traits which offer a relationship between literary and what might be called real-life characters. The texts of Ulrich von Lichtenstein, Helene Kottanerin, and Johannes Tichtel are discussed from that perspective, and more than once Matthias Meyer, thanks to his own methodology, is able to identify passages in the texts that give us an idea of how 'individuality' might be conceptualised in the late Middle Ages. What is lacking in all his cases, he observes, is a coherent autobiographical narrative. However, especially with Johannes Tichtel's writings, a certain type of individuality can be detected. Against the background of in- and exclusion individuality Matthias Meyer offers a mixed picture: on the one hand he finds clear elements of an inclusionary individuality (i.e. in the case of Ulrich von Lichtenstein), on the other hand he states that his authors "are located at the intersection of many and often conflicting discourses ..., they combine in themselves many opposing principles and thus achieve a high degree of individuality".

Gregor Rohmann, offering his own reading of Luhmann's suggestion, argues passionately against the usual interpretation of pre-modern individuality within systems theory. Analysing late medieval house books, he emphasises that these are not to be read as autobiographical texts but as devices for collective remembrance. For him, it is first of all Christianity – especially baptism,

which established an individual relationship with God – that fostered individuality. His main thesis is that during the early and high Middle Ages autobiographical texts develop their heterology mainly by a relationship with God. “From the later Middle Ages onwards, social strata and kinship bonds came to superimpose this religious inclusion and thus to emancipate the subject from God”. He then concludes that “kinship was not the obstacle to, but the medium of early modern individuation”.

Christoph Rolker analyses the late medieval practices of using surnames by bishops, noblemen and city dwellers (men and women), drawing on sources from the region around Constance in southern Germany. His research topic is interesting for our discussion, as family-names may on the one hand link a single person to a group, and on the other hand are able to ‘individualise’ him / her. After a short summary of the development of surname-giving practices in different parts of Europe, he discusses – taking our theoretical approach into account – whether names and the changing of names could be regarded as a form of (almost modern) role taking, whether it rather serves ‘functional’ purposes or highlights an affiliation to a certain family or group. The reader is given a very differentiated picture of name practices: “certainly with bishops, often with noble names, and partly with the multiple surnames of married women, we can assume the surname was used ‘functionally’ in the sense that the use of this or that name indicated the assumption of specific roles”. However, it is also true that “changing and multiple names are indicative of the changing and multiple affiliations which are summarised as ‘family’”.

The costume book (*Trachtenbuch*) of the bookkeeper Matthäus Schwarz (1497-1574), who worked for the Fugger company in Augsburg, is analysed by the art historian Heike Schlie. The book and its numerous pictures, which present Matthäus himself in different dresses and even naked, have already attracted some attention ifrom historical research. In this well-elaborated book Matthäus Schwarz tells us about his life, combining text and images. But beware! As Heike Schlie emphasises, “the images are not the result of self-consideration, but are at best models for this self-consideration”. This has to be taken into account when the drawings are interpreted. The core argument of her paper lies within these lines: she wants to “demonstrate that the bookkeeper has created a unique medium, in which the earthly, the cosmic and salvation history are visible in his person as on a projection screen and – uniquely – can be visible only in this way”. However, that does not mean that Matthäus as a person disappears. “The aim of the description of the self in the world is *vali-*

dation, which refers to both the order described and one's own positioning in this order. Individuality begins here with an individual perspective or view of the world, and this observer perspective of necessity means a partial detachment from the collective".

To find out how a person identifies him / herself and how he or she conceptualises others, Sabine Schmolinsky looks at 'dialogue situations', that is: the encounter of persons, quite often in everyday activities. Besides letters, which in their medieval form can rightly be conceptualised as such encounters, she draws on a great variety of texts, dating from late Antiquity until the end of the Middle Ages, which relate about such meetings. How do persons identify themselves in direct contact? Names, she argues, may (cautiously) be read as being self-referential, while pointing out to estate or family may be interpreted as being hetero-referential. As in the contributions of Miriam Bedos-Rezak and Roland Rolker, attention is paid to the 'I' and names – but she looks at these features from a different angle. Among various interesting insights, she summarises one major result as follows: "It thus appears that the topic of individualisation should be shifted to self-identification which may be conceptualised as a specific blend of self-referential as well as hetero-referential modes".

Let me again emphasise my gratitude to all contributors in confronting their sources with a not at all straightforward approach. 'Two scientists, four opinions', as a German saying has it – and this volume certainly seems to prove it. However, one thing has become clear: without a theory-based concept of what 'individuality' might be like it is difficult to gain concrete results that could, perhaps, form the basis for further research.

Bodily Practices as an Expression of ‘Individuality’ in the Letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz (1652-1722)

MAREIKE BÖTH

In his article in Richard van Dülmen’s *Entdeckung des Ich* (*Discovery of the I*), published in 2001, Otto Ulbricht states: “*Individualität ist ein schwieriges Konzept, denn es besteht keine Einigkeit darüber, was darunter verstanden werden soll*” (“Individuality is a difficult concept because there is no agreement about how to understand it”).¹ This diffuse conceptual understanding is due to the different connotations that have been attached to the concept in various historical periods. Thus, medieval and early modern historical research is principally faced by the task of first liberating the concept of ‘individuality’ from the modern perception of an ‘individual’, which from the time of Rousseau and Goethe has been morally charged, ‘autonomous’ or self-styled ‘autonomous’, if they wish to make it productive for the analysis of pre-modern sources and not merely search for ‘traces’ (in the modern sense) of ‘individual-

¹ O. ULBRICHT, “Ich-Erfahrung: Individualität in Autobiographien”, in: *Entdeckung des Ich: Die Geschichte der Individualisierung vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. R. VAN DÜLMEN (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2001), pp. 109-144, at p. 111.

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Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 47-80.

ity' in a teleological-modernist theoretical perspective or even for some 'individualism' in the pre-modern.²

It is possible to approach the concept by distinguishing between two levels of the problem, albeit closely related with each other: in everyday language 'individuality' is often understood as the recognition of the "difference of every single person", his / her "distinctiveness",³ his / her singularity or uniqueness. Numerous academic debates are based on this fundamental understanding that is related to self-knowledge and self-perception – for example, in the search for practices of self-identification in pre-modern texts, such as the use of the first person singular. On a second level the question, under the conceptual label of 'individuality', is one of how historical actors understood themselves in relation to their social environment. A single person thus sees him / herself in contrast to the social sphere, in relation to which s/he has to behave in a certain way as an 'individual', within which s/he has to position her / himself and is positioned by others.⁴ Given a problem that inflects on the relationship between 'I' and the collective level, it seems at first sight reasonable that the relevant social structure within which the 'individual' wishes to or has to situate him / herself determines the course of these processes of self-positioning.

² Cf. K. VON GREYERZ, "Spuren eines vormodernen Individualismus in englischen Selbstzeugnissen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in: *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherungen an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, ed. W. SCHULZE (Berlin, 1996: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 2), pp. 131-145, at p. 131. Individuality here is defined, with reference to Winfried Schulze, in a decidedly modern sense as "Gegensatz zur 'Einbindung des Menschen in umfassendere Sozialverbände' (W. Schulze) und in deren Glaubenssystem" ("Opposition to 'integration of the person into more comprehensive social associations' (W. Schulze) and their belief systems"); W. SCHULZE, "Das Wagnis der Individualisierung", in: *Wege in die Neuzeit*, ed. T. CRAMER (Munich, 1988: *Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur* 8), pp. 270-286, at p. 272: "Generell lässt sich feststellen, daß unter Individualisierung ein Oppositum zur Einbindung des Menschen in umfassendere Sozialverbände gesehen worden ist In diesem Zusammenhang bedeutet Individualisierung Befreiung von Bindungen, die dem jeweiligen Verband eigen sind, Abkehr von den jeweiligen Normensystemen, Nutzung neuer Ausdrucksformen" ("In general it can be stated that individualisation has been understood as an opposition to the integration of the person into more comprehensive social groups In this context individualisation means liberation from ties that belong to the relevant association, departure from the relevant norm systems, use of new forms of expression").

³ ULBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", p. 111.

⁴ Cf. ULBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", p. 111. The term 'self-positioning' is related to Helmuth Plessner's studies on *Positionalität*, perceived as a specific form of relation between living creatures and their environment. Cf. H. PLESSNER, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch*, 3rd edn. (Berlin, 1975: *Sammlung Göschen* 2200), pp. 127-132.

The systems theorist Niklas Luhmann, with reference to this thesis, suggests a separation of the analytical levels of social structure and the semantics of individuality concepts in order to determine whether social evolution produces changes of individuality semantics in the same way as it changes social structures.⁵ In other words, he postulates a connection between a social-structural macro level and a semantically determined meso level of discursively produced norm and value concepts, which in turn gradually produce effects on the micro level of the 'identity' positions of social actors.⁶

Luhmann is therefore particularly interested in the change of social primary differentiation, in the transition from a segmentary stratified to a functionally differentiated society.⁷ He concludes that pre-modern and modern individuality semantics and thus the modes of personal self-understanding are to be fundamentally distinguished from each other. While the pre-modern individual in a stratified society that is not or less strongly characterised by functionally differentiated systems is represented holistically in its segmentary or social standing⁸ as a person,⁹ the modern individual sees him / herself confronted with the problem of finding this unique place anywhere in the multiplicity of stakes in different function systems and thus risks becoming 'alien' to others and ultimately to him / herself.¹⁰ While the pre-modern individual is

⁵ Cf. N. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", in: ID., *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik: Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1980-1989), 3, pp. 149-258, at pp. 153-154.

⁶ On the distinction between these levels of a sociological analysis cf. G. WINKLER and N. DEGELE, *Intersektionalität: Zur Analyse sozialer Ungleichheit* (Bielefeld, 2009), pp. 18-22.

⁷ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", p. 155; N. LUHMANN, "Inklusion und Exklusion", in: ID., *Soziologische Aufklärung*, 6 vols. (Opladen, 1970-1995), 6, *Die Soziologie und der Mensch*, pp. 237-265, at pp. 242 and 264. On the characteristics of these forms of differentiation: ID., *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 634-662 and pp. 678-706; ID., "Identitätsgebrauch in selbstsubstitutiven Ordnungen, besonders Gesellschaften", in: *Identität*, ed. O. MARQUARD and K. STIERLE (Munich, 1979: *Poetik und Hermeneutik* 8), pp. 315-345, at pp. 328-329.

⁸ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", pp. 156-157; LUHMANN, "Inklusion und Exklusion", pp. 242-243 and pp. 258.

⁹ On the concept of the 'person', which combines psychic systems via communication with social systems cf. N. LUHMANN, "Die Form 'Person'", in: LUHMANN, *Soziologische Aufklärung*, 6, pp. 142-154.

¹⁰ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", pp. 158-159; C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), p. 35; C. BOHN and A. HAHN, "Selbstbeschreibung und Selbstthematisierung: Facetten einer Identität in der modernen Gesellschaft", in: *Identität und Moderne*, ed. H. WILLEMS and A. HAHN (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 33-61, at pp. 38-42 and 48-49; C. BOHN, "Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität", in: *Sinn-*

thus included in precisely a subsystem of society and defines him / herself also via this inclusion (inclusion individuality), the modern individual leaves him / herself to the self-reflection of his / her various roles in functional subsystems and is no longer able to define him / herself as a person via inclusion in society (exclusion individuality).¹¹

Applied to the concept of 'identity', the result is that in pre-modern self-descriptions personal and social 'identity' fall together, whereas the modern individual has to struggle with a division between 'I' and 'me'.¹² In a direct line of connection to this there is the idea of stable, not to say static identities in the pre-modern period, which through birth are tied to social strata and cultural conventions and remain undisturbed through the course of one's lifetime. Contingency, on the other hand, is considered a constitutive principle of modern identities.¹³

generatoren: Fremd- und Selbstthematisierung in soziologisch-historischer Perspektive: Alois Hahn zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. C. BOHN and H. WILLEMS (Konstanz, 2001), pp. 159-178, at p. 160; R. STICHWEH, *Inklusion und Exklusion: Studien zur Gesellschaftstheorie* (Bielefeld, 2005), pp. 135-138.

¹¹ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", pp. 156-159; C. BOHN and A. HAHN, "Patterns of inclusion and exclusion: Property, nation and religion", *Soziale Systeme: Zeitschrift für soziologische Theorie* 8 (2002), pp. 8-26, at pp. 9 and 12: "The social identity of an individual characterised by exclusion ... then can be qualified as a 'negative individualism' produced by a deficit (soustraction) of social integration (encadrement)".

¹² G.H. MEAD, *Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft aus der Sicht des Sozialbehaviourismus*, ed. C.W. MORRIS (Frankfurt am Main, 1968), pp. 216-222; L. KRAPPMANN, *Soziologische Dimensionen der Identität: Strukturelle Bedingungen für die Teilnahme an Interaktionsprozessen*, 8th edn. (Stuttgart, 1993: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Bildungsforschung*), p. 21; N. MEUTER, "Müssen Individuen individuell sein?", in: *Transitorische Identität: Der Prozesscharakter des modernen Selbst*, ed. J. STRAUB and J. RENN (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), pp. 187-210, at p. 193. Luhmann himself does not work with concepts of identity: cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", p. 152; LUHMANN, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, p. 596. Cf. also BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns of inclusion and exclusion", p. 12, who introduce the concepts of 'participatory / biographical identity' for modern identity constructions and 'participative identity' for pre-modern identity constructions. The latter "defines itself through affiliation" and is characterised by a "coincidence of social descriptions and self description" (BOHN and HAHN, "Selbstbeschreibung und Selbstthematisierung", pp. 37-38).

¹³ Cf. J. RENN and J. STRAUB, "Transitorische Identität", in: *Transitorische Identität*, pp. 10-31, at pp. 13-14 and 20-22. In contrast, more recent research stresses the dynamics of early modern societies (*Ständegesellschaft*), which directly influence the processes of (self)-positioning. Cf. D. FREIST, "'Ich will Dir selbst ein Bild von mir entwerfen': Praktiken der Selbst-Bildung im Spannungsfeld ständischer Normen und gesellschaftlicher Dynamik", in: *Selbst-Bildungen: Soziale und kulturelle Praktiken der Subjektivierung*, ed. T. ALKEMEYER et al. (Bielefeld, 2013), pp. 151-174, at p. 151; M. BÖTH, "... daß mein leib mein seye: Selbstpositionierungsprozesse im Spiegel erzählter Körperpraxis in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652-1722)", in: *Diskurse*

Luhmann points out that this modern understanding of exclusion individuality ultimately reduces the meaning of *in-dividuum* as an indivisible unit to absurdity. Accordingly, the modern meaning of individuality has a compensatory element, an illusion of autonomy based on an increased choice of opportunities compared with one's own biographical development and a social participation that is in principle accessible to all but ultimately based, in the quantitative sense, on increased social dependencies.¹⁴ Because of these insights, which reveal modern individuality as a semantic construct, as 'ideology', Luhmann adheres firmly to the concept of 'individuality' in order to comprehend the totally differently structured pre-modern social positionings. From a medievalist and early modern perspective this, at first glance, seems quite attractive, as this understanding reflects modern (and postmodern) individuality semantics and robs it of the idea of a progressiveness that is to be evaluated more highly.¹⁵ A pre-modern individual is thus not any less individual than a modern one – 'being individual' is just based on different modes of positioning in society and thus on different value concepts. Luhmann's considerations thus offer an opportunity to think of 'individuality' in a historically situational way.

This brief presentation of Luhmann's theoretical considerations yields further questions for the historical analysis of social structure, individuality semantics and 'identity' or rather self-understandings:¹⁶ when it comes to the examination of pre-modern, modern and even postmodern ego-documents, it has to be verified to what extent personal self-understandings produce evidence of the relevant social structure. In particular for the pre-modern stratified society it has to be examined what significance is attributed to other 'identity categories' next to status affiliation, such as gender, age, ethnicity, nationality,

– *Körper – Artefakte: Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*, ed. D. FREIST (Bielefeld, 2015: *Praktiken der Subjektivierung* 4), pp. 221-241.

¹⁴ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", pp. 160, 197, and 223; LUHMANN, "Die Form 'Person'", pp. 146-147; BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns of inclusion and exclusion", p.13: "The ordering principle of stratified societies is based on the inclusion or exclusion of individuals, while in functionally differentiated societies the notion of individuals is problematic as such".

¹⁵ By contrast, the suggestion was made some time ago to exclude the modern concept of the 'individual' from the discussion; cf. G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Forschungskonzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung", in: *Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Forschungskonzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung*, ed. G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH (Göttingen, 2005: *Querelles: Jahrbuch für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* 10), pp. 7-27.

¹⁶ For a critical inquiry of the term 'identity' cf. R. BRUBAKER and F. COOPER, "Beyond 'identity'", *Theory and Society* 20 (2000), pp. 1-47.

religion, denominations, and how possible self-descriptions are related with each other. Of central importance is furthermore the question of whether there is a model to explain the connected processual change of social structure, individuality semantics, and self-understandings between the modern and pre-modern periods. Can the analysis of ego-documents possibly contribute to concretising the time framework of social structural change and change of discursive norm and value concepts as well as self-understandings of individuals? How do possible results of such research relate to paradigmatic theses, such as Koselleck's re-evaluation of key concepts of sociopolitical language in the so-called *Sattelzeit* ('transition period'), between 1750 and 1850,¹⁷ which for Luhmann in turn is the decisive period for the structural change of society from stratificational-segmentary to functional differentiation?¹⁸

*Inclusion Individuality' and the Letters of Elisabeth Charlotte, Princess of the Palatinate and Duchess of Orléans*¹⁹

These questions about 'inclusion individuality' will be examined in this article by referring to one of the best-known ego-documents of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: the letters of Elisabeth Charlotte, daughter of the Palatine Prince-Elector. At the age of nineteen Liselotte, as she had been called in her childhood and is best known in Germany nowadays, was married to the only brother of Louis XIV, Philippe d'Orléans. From her move to the French court in 1671 to her death in 1722 she remained in regular corre-

¹⁷ Cf. R. KOSELLECK, "Einleitung", in: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. by O. BRUNNER et al., 8 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972-1997), I, pp. XIII-XXVII, at p. XV; R. KOSELLECK, "Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft", in: *Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft und Praxis des Geschichtsunterrichts*, ed. W. CONZE (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 10-28, at p. 13-15.

¹⁸ Cf. LUHMANN, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, pp. 707-713, whose argument is inconsistent, suggesting on the one hand a lengthy process of functional differentiation (pp. 710-712), while strongly emphasising on the other hand the period from about 1750 to 1850, in which a parallel total movement of functional differentiation emerges (p. 713); F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "Mittelalterliche Rituale in systemtheoretischer Perspektive: Übergangsriten als basale Kommunikationsform in einer stratifikatorisch-segmentären Gesellschaft", in: *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: Exemplarische Fallstudien*, ed. F. BECKER (Frankfurt am Main, Campus Historische Studien 37), pp. 108-156, at pp. 120-121.

¹⁹ The results presented here are based on my PhD thesis, M. BÖTH, *Erzählweisen des Selbst: Körperpraktiken in den Briefen Liselottes von der Pfalz (1652-1722)* (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar, 2015: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 24).

spondence with her close relatives in Germany. From the 1680s, when she became involved in the intrigues of her husband's favourites, Elisabeth Charlotte lived in increasing isolation at the court of Versailles.²⁰ On the other hand, her network of correspondents extended and her letter-writing intensified.

Most of the surviving letters are very personal, almost like written conversations, and in them Elisabeth Charlotte clearly constructed a world where she felt both understood and appreciated.²¹ Visits from people who actually belonged to her close environment are described as "interruptions",²² that is events that disturbed her everyday routine, which in later years for the most part consisted of writing. It is estimated that Elisabeth Charlotte wrote up to 60,000 letters, of which quite a considerable number, about 6,000, have survived.²³ For her, writing was not simply a means of staying in touch and bridging the spatial distance between author and recipient – her letters were also a practice of self-reassurance, by which she played out social conflicts about belonging and creating distinctions. Because of this daily examination of the

²⁰ From the many biographies of Liselotte von der Pfalz that have been published so far, D. VAN DER CRUYSE, *"Madame sein ist ein ellendes Handwerck": Liselotte von der Pfalz – Eine deutsche Prinzessin am Hof des Sonnenkönigs*, 8th edn. (Munich, 2002), has achieved the rank of a standard work.

²¹ Cf. V. KAPP, "Pathos der Ehrlichkeit und Kunst des Schreibens in den Briefen der Liselotte von der Pfalz", in: *Pathos, Klatsch und Ehrlichkeit: Liselotte von der Pfalz am Hofe des Sonnenkönigs*, ed. K.J. MATTHEIER and P. VALENTIN (Tübingen, 1990: *Romanica et Comparatistica* 14), pp. 175–199, at p. 194.

²² Cf. To Louise, Paris, 17.01.1722, in: *Briefe der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans: Aus den Jahren 1676–1722*, ed. W.L. HOLLAND, 6 vols. (Stuttgart, 1867–1881: *Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart* 88, 107, 122, 132, 144 157), 6, No. 1295, p. 311: "Aber da interompirt man [mich]. Paris ist woll ein verzweyffelter ort mitt den ewigen contretemps undt interuptionen" ("But I keep being interrupted. Paris is a desperate place with its never-ending incidents and interruptions").

²³ Cf. VAN DER CRUYSE, *Madame*, p. 15; H. CORDES, "Ich schreibe, wie ich rede...": *Ein Literaturverzeichnis anlässlich des 350. Geburtstages der Liselotte von der Pfalz*, 4th edn. 2006, <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/wir/Literaturauswahllisten/Liselotte.html> (consulted 7.04.2010). However, the estimations vary quite strongly. A more careful approach is taken, for example, by K.J. MATTHEIER, "Madame als Briefschreiberin", in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz: Madame am Hofe des Sonnenkönigs: Ausstellung der Stadt Heidelberg zur 800-Jahr-Feier, 21. September 1996 bis 26. Januar 1997 im Heidelberger Schloss*, ed. S. PAAS (Heidelberg, 1996), pp. 95–97, at p. 95; cf. also *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling Briefen: Sämtliche Briefe der Elisabeth Charlotte, duchesse d'Orléans an die Oberhofmeisterin Anna Katharina von Harling, geb. von Offeln, und deren Gemahl Christian Friedrich von Harling, Geheimrat und Oberstallmeister, zu Hannover*, ed. H. HELFER, *ergänzt durch ein Gesamtinventar ihrer bisher bekannten Briefe an verschiedenen Empfänger, mit einem Glossar von M.-L. BABIN* (Hannover, 2007: *Veröffentlichungen der Pfälzischen Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften* 102), pp. 14–15.

self and its position in society, the letters of Elisabeth Charlotte seem to be a particularly suitable source to approach the theoretical questions posed above.

The function of writing as an everyday practice of self-reassurance becomes particularly clear in Elisabeth Charlotte's writing about her body, her everyday practice and her perceptions of health and illness. In almost every one of the surviving letters reference is made to these aspects, both on the level of social expectations towards the 'body' and of personal intercourse with it. My approach to the question of self-positioning and positioning by others is thus a praxeological one.²⁴ In this article I understand and analyse body (practices) as a platform of self-representation and venue of hitherto conflict-ridden interactions in the sociocultural environment.²⁵

Writing about Body and Health as Self-Positioning(s) within the Social Sphere

Among the first impressions conveyed by Elisabeth Charlotte in letters home from the court of the Sun-King there is a description of perceived differences with respect to the health practices of walking. The following passage from a letter to her aunt Sophie of Hanover is intended to give an insight into basic categories of self-understanding in her letters.

*Es ist nicht, daß ich hir mehr spatzire oder stercker, alß ich bey unß pflegte aber die leütte hir sein so lam wie die gänße, undt ohne den König, mad. de Chevreuse undt ich ist kein seel, so 20 schriett thun kan ohne schwitzen vndt schnauffen. Ich wolte, daß ich vergangen nach dem nachtessen was calopirt hette, so were ich nicht kranck worden, wie E.L. aus fraw von Harling brieff sehen werden.*²⁶

It is not that I go for walks more or more strenuously than I used to do at our home, but people here are as lame as geese, and apart from the King, Mme de Chevreuse and myself there is not a soul who can walk 20 paces without breaking into a sweat

²⁴ Cf. WINKER and DEGELE, *Intersektionalität*, pp. 63-64; BÖTH, "... daß mein leib mein seye".

²⁵ BÖTH, *Körper-Wissen*.

²⁶ To Sophie, St. Germain, 05.02.1672, in: *Aus den Briefen der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans an die Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. E. BODEMANN, 2 vols. (Hannover, 1891), 1, No. 1, p. 1.

and wheezing. I wish I had gone for a ride after supper, then I would not have fallen ill, as Your Grace will see from Frau von Harling's letter.²⁷

At the beginning of February 1672 Elisabeth Charlotte had fallen ill for the first time at the French court, and she immediately began to speculate in a letter to her aunt about the reasons for this: the hierarchically ordered oppositional pair 'healthy' and 'ill' forms the background criterion Elisabeth Charlotte applies to her observations. She moves a cultural-spatial or person-related line of difference to the fore – on the one hand, "*hir*" ("here"), the concrete location where the French court resided, and on the other hand "*bey unß*" ("at our home"). The latter includes the Palatinate, where she was born, spent the early years of her childhood and youth, together with the duchy Braunschweig-Lüneburg, where her aunt Sophie had gone after her marriage and where Elisabeth Charlotte had spent formative years in her childhood. In the *hir*, to which she remained physically attached, she found almost nobody who was strong and healthy enough to withstand physical strain. *Bey unß*, on the other hand, is a synonym for the health-promoting behaviour of virtuous people who belonged to the two core regional points of the first period of her life. It seems almost to be a 'quality' of these spatially located family members that they are conscious of how important it is to keep one's own body in good condition.

This interpretation seemed too 'generalising' to Elisabeth Charlotte even when she was writing. She thus felt obliged to add, by way of qualification, that nobody except the King, Mme de Chevreuse, and herself was able to go for reasonably long walks. In her characterisation of the movement practices she seems explicitly to address men and women equally: Louis XIV, who was known for his enjoyment of physical exercise and iron constitution, and Madame de Chevreuse, a lady of the court of the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria. On closer inspection, however, gender-related implications that run counter to cultural-spatially oriented differentiation become clear in this statement. When Elisabeth Charlotte introduces Mme de Chevreuse as an example, she is pointing to the type of woman fond of exercise that was relatively uncommon at court. Marie de Rohan, who later became Duchesse de Chevreuse, is said to

²⁷ The following original quotations were translated by the author. Cf. also *A Woman's Life in the court of the Sun King: Letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz, 1652-1722, Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchess d'Orléans*, trans. E. FORSTER (Baltimore, 1984), p. 7: "It is not that I am taking more or more strenuous walks here than I used to do, but the people here are as lame as geese, and except for the King, Madame de Chevreuse, and myself there is not a soul here who can do more than twenty steps without sweating and puffing".

have hunted, fenced and taken part in horse races in her childhood and youth, wearing her brother's clothes. Her wide knowledge and experience of horses and falconry, rather unusual for a woman, is said to have both surprised and impressed Louis XIII, with whom she frequently went hunting.²⁸ So, in the passages where Elisabeth Charlotte supposedly was generalising, she was in fact relaying a particular idea of gender concepts that were expressed in this practice of physical exercise.

But what is not addressed in the passage quoted is social stratum. It forms an unquestioned basis of Elisabeth Charlotte's description: as the daughter of the Prince-Elector of the Palatinate she belonged to the high nobility of the Holy Roman Empire. When she got married she became one of the first ladies at the French court – a position that, by her account, perfectly matched with her own high lineage. References to belonging to a particular social stratum, therefore, were less relevant in this context and thus remained in the background.

Taking the self-understandings, which in this quotation are expressed both explicitly and implicitly, as a starting point, I wish to examine processes of Elisabeth Charlotte's self-positioning and positioning by others in her biography and shed some light on them with respect to the significance of the categories of 'nation', understood as cultural-spatial origin, gender, status, and their interactions.

Bodily Practices in Cultural-Spatial 'National' Difference

In Elisabeth Charlotte's letters it is noticeable that from a purely quantitative point of view body practices and health habits are ranked mainly on the basis of cultural-spatial differentiation lines. In this tendency to assign 'healthy' and 'ill' to family-related cultural spaces Elisabeth Charlotte interprets nutrition habits in particular. If in her description of different forms of exercise in 1672 she distinguished between *hir* and *bey unß*, her terminology mutated in later years to 'German' and 'French'. From about 1710 – as her 'nostalgia' became perceptibly more acute in the final years of her life – her comments on French food and other 'quite different' preferences became integrated with increasing virulence into this scheme of 'national' difference.²⁹ The

²⁸ Cf. M. PRAWDIN, *Marie de Rohan: Duchesse de Chevreuse* (London, 1971), pp. 18-19.

²⁹ Cf. W. BROOKS, "Nostalgia in the letters of the second Madame", *Cahiers du 17e siècle* 10 (2006), pp. 1-17, at pp. 2 and 6; P.J. YARROW, "Fifty years an alien: Elisabeth Charlotte,

list of food items that were not available in France, that were prepared with less taste, or that had been provided almost by nature itself in an inferior form, becomes longer with the passage of years: it ranges from “*schlapp*” (“weak”) and “*sewer[em]*” (“sour”) beer,³⁰ to “*frantzösche wein*” (“French wine”) that was no good for making a “*Kaltschale*” (“cold soup”),³¹ to fruit and vegetables, such as “*erbärmlich*” (“pathetically”) prepared “*sawer krautt*”³² or kale,³³ “*waßerigem*” (“watery”) radishes,³⁴ “*mehligem*” (“mealy”) apricots,³⁵ the lack of wild cherries,³⁶ “*ohnmöglich hir zu eßen[dem] schwarz brodt*” (“inedible black bread”),³⁷ “*schlapp[em]*” (“tasteless”) boar’s meat,³⁸ to the lack of “*bretzeln*”³⁹ and “*pfanen-kuchen*” (“pancakes”) without “*süßen geschmack*” (“sweet taste”), “*wie waßer*” (“like water”).⁴⁰ In short, Elisabeth Charlotte reports that she simply prefers to eat what she has always eaten since her youth⁴¹ and has never got used to that “*frantzösche gefräß*” (“French grub”).⁴²

Duchess of Orléans 1671-1722”, *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 17 (1995), pp. 111-124, at p. 115; K.J. MATTHEIER, “Deutsche Esskultur am Versailler Hof Ludwigs XIV.: Über die kulinarischen Vorlieben und Abneigungen der Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans”, in *Essen und kulturelle Identität: Europäische Perspektiven*, ed. H.J. TEUTEBERG et al. (Berlin, 1997: Kulturthema Essen 2), pp. 148-154, at p. 151.

³⁰ To Louise, Paris, 04.03.1667, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 47, p. 79. Cf. also MATTHEIER, “Deutsche Esskultur am Versailler Hof”, pp. 148-154.

³¹ To Louise, Paris, 26.02.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1203, pp. 21-22.

³² To Louise, St. Cloud, 29.05.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1231, p. 132.

³³ Cf. To Sophie, Versailles, 01.01.1693, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 1, No. 157, p. 174.

³⁴ To Louise, St. Cloud, 25.06.1722, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1338, pp. 420-421.

³⁵ To Louise, St. Cloud, 30.04.1719, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 4, No. 1014, pp. 103-104.

³⁶ Cf. To Louise, Paris, 26.02.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1203, pp. 21-22.

³⁷ To Louise, St. Cloud, 10.07.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1244, pp. 171 and 174.

³⁸ To Louise, St. Cloud, 26.10.1719, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 4, No. 1064, pp. 280-281; To Louise, St. Cloud, 01.10.1719, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 4, No. 1057, pp. 252-253.

³⁹ To Louise, Paris, 29.10.1713, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 2, No. 739, p. 660.

⁴⁰ To Louise, St. Cloud, 03.05.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1225, pp. 98-99.

⁴¹ To Amelise, Versailles, 17.12.1705, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 283, p. 430: “*Man ist gern, was man in seiner jugendt zu eßen gewohnt ist. Es ist nun 34 jahr, daß ich in Frankreich bin undt habe mich noch nicht ahn daß eßen hir im landt gewohnen können, es mein leben kein ragoust*” (“One likes to eat what one ate in one’s youth. I have been in France for 34 years now and I have still not been able to get used to the food here. I have never in all my life eaten ragout”).

⁴² To Louise, Paris, 20.12.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1288, p. 301: “*Ich bin keine gr[o]ßen eßerin nicht, habe selten großen appetit undt daß frantzosch gefräß verlaydt mir alles eßen, habe mich in 50 jahren nicht dran gewohnen können. Mein sohn hatt gutte koch, aber keine ragout eße ich*” (“I am not a great eater, have seldom a large appetite and the French grub puts me off eating, have never been able to get used to it within 50 years. My son has good cooks,

From these descriptions it can be seen clearly that food items are categorised as ‘strong’, that is natural and health-giving at the same time, and ‘weak’, not strengthening and ‘tasteless’. ‘German’ food is without exception categorised as ‘strong’ and demarcated as a whole from a less strong and less ‘healthy’ French nature.⁴³ Elisabeth Charlotte insisted that her favourite food not only tasted better but was also healthier.⁴⁴ Even after an illness she preferred food such as smoked ham and cured or smoked sausages rather than a lighter diet.⁴⁵

She also attached human properties to the food preferences of the French and the Germans. In 1703 she wrote to her half-sister Amalie Elisabeth:

*Ich wollte lieber mitt leütte zu thun haben, so mir gutte metwürst, knackwürst undt breühan machten, alß mit naßbeweißen, wie man sie hir hatt, denen man nichts zu recht sagen kan.*⁴⁶

I would rather have do with people who made me good sausages of all sorts and *breühan* [Hanoverian beer] than with smart alecks you can’t say anything right to.

but I will not eat ragout”).

⁴³ Cf. To Amelise, Trianon, 23.07.1705, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 258, p. 405: “*Groben speyßen seindt nicht ungesundt undt geben gutte nahrung undt beßer alß viel bouillongeschlegs*” (“Coarse food is not unhealthy and is more nutritious than a lot of bouillon mush”).

⁴⁴ To Christian Friedrich von Harling, Paris, 16.02.1719, in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen*, ed. HELFER, No. 304, p. 499: “... *der köhlsamen hatt mich gantz erfreuet, den Ich eße nichts liebers – alß den braunen köhl. Er schmeckt aber hir nicht so woll alß in Teütschlandt. Ich glaube – sie richtens nicht recht. Ich bitte also Monsr Harling – er wolle mir doch auff setzen lassen auff frantzösisch – wie man es zu richten muß; Ich mag mich eine recht freüde drauff – sie wider recht zu eßen; Daß ist ein recht gesundt eßen. Aber vor die brust ist es über alles – waß man auch brauchen kann; ...*” (“... the cabbage seed made me very happy, because there is nothing I like better than kale. But it does not taste as well here as in Germany. I think - they don’t prepare it properly. So I ask M. Harling to instruct me in French how it is to be prepared. I will really enjoy eating it again properly prepared. It is very healthy food. But to protect the breast it is better than anything else you can use ...”).

⁴⁵ To Louise, St. Cloud, 16.06.1720, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 5, No. 1131, pp. 174-176: “*Die metwürst haben mich wider zu kräfften gebracht undt ein wenig rohe schincken, daß hatt mir wider appetit geben. Monsieur Harlin metwürst sein unvergleichlich beßer, alß baron Görtz sein; man kan sie nicht beßer eßen. Ich will mir heütte davon geben laßen; mein magen hatt sich sehr an den braunschweigischen speyßen gewohnt in den 4 jahr[en]m daß ich zu Hannover bey ma tante S. geweßen*” (“The sausages have restored my strength and a little smoked ham, this restored my appetite. M. Harlin’s sausages are incomparably better than those of Baron Görtz. You cannot eat better sausages. It is my intention to get some today. My stomach got very used to Brunswick food in the 4 years I spent in Hanover with my late aunt S.”).

⁴⁶ To Amelise, Versailles, 27.05.1703, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 194, p. 327.

People who prefer strong food were, in her view, particularly honourable and trustworthy. It is possible to talk openly with people like this without having to put up with a lecture. In accordance with the motto "You are what you eat", she concluded in 1721:

*Ich bin in allem, auch in eßen undt drincken, noch gantz teütsch, wie ich all mein leben geweßen.*⁴⁷

In every way, including eating and drinking, I am still quite as German as I have been all my life.⁴⁸

As the ultimate explanation for her preferences she drew attention to a somatisation in the national sense. In July 1718 she writes:

*Ich hab mein teütsch maul [emphasis MB] noch so auff die teütschen speißen verleckert – daß Ich keinen einzigen frantzöschchen ragout leyden, noch eßen kann.*⁴⁹

I have spoiled *my German mouth* [emphasis MB] so much with German dishes that I cannot stand the sight of or eat a single French stew.⁵⁰

or again:

*Ich habe - gott lob noch einen gutten teütschen magen [emphasis MB] – der alles woll verdauet; ...*⁵¹

I still have, thank God, a *good German stomach* [emphasis MB] that can digest everything⁵²

⁴⁷ To Louise, St. Cloud, 03.05.1721, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1225, p. 99.

⁴⁸ Cf. also FORSTER, *Life*, p. 264: "In everything, including what I eat and drink, I am still altogether German, as I have been all my life".

⁴⁹ To Christian Friedrich von Harling, St. Cloud, 28.07.1718, in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen*, ed. HELFER, No. 279, p. 453.

⁵⁰ Cf. also FORSTER, *Life*, p. 215: "My German mouth is still so keen on our German food that I will not and cannot eat a single French *ragout*". Cf. YARROW, "Fifty years", p. 115.

⁵¹ To Christian Friedrich von Harling, St. Cloud, 03.07.1718, in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen*, ed. HELFER, No. 277, p. 450.

⁵² Cf. also FORSTER, *Life*, p. 215: "I fortunately still have a good German stomach that digests everything properly".

The reference to her “German stomach” forms the culmination point when it serves as a demarcation line against the medical interventions applied by French medical culture. ‘German’ food, such as kale and sauerkraut are more conducive to health than “*alle ordonantzen von den docktoren*” (“all doctors’ instructions”).⁵³ She reports almost angrily about the unreasonableness of French doctors who do not wish to understand that a Palatinate stomach is not a French one, and for this reason requires another form of medical treatment.⁵⁴ The uniqueness that was emphasised in pre-modern concepts of the body⁵⁵ is thus moulded here in a specific and personal way – Elisabeth Charlotte thought of her body as ‘German’.

The distinction between *frantzösisch* and *teütsch* is based, with reference to the family, on an emphatic segmentary (albeit class-internal) understanding of society, which clearly offered a fundamental possibility of demarcating

⁵³ To Sophie, Marly, 10.11.1712, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 807, p. 323.

⁵⁴ To Louise, St. Cloud, 20.08.1722, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1354, pp. 452-453: “*Er [ihr Leibarzt Teray, MB] ist gewiß der beste docktor von gantz Franckreich, aber er will nicht begreifen, daß ein pfaltzischer magen kein frantzösischer ist undt sich mitt dem villen purgiren nicht behelffen kan.*” (“He [her doctor Teray, MB] is certainly the best doctor in the whole of France, but he refuses to see that a Palatinate stomach is not a French one and cannot be helped by excessive purgation”). Cf. To Louise, St. Cloud, 17.09.1722, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 6, No. 1362, p. 463: “*Ich dachte woll, daß es so hergehen würde; den ich weiß, wie wenig mein pfaltzischer magen remedien vertragen kan, habe der fraw von Rathsamshaussen von wort zu wordt vorher gesagt, wie es gehen würde; aber [weil] ich mich [nicht] wolte plagen lassen, habe ich lieber gethan, was man gewolt, habe doch dagegen protestirt*” (“I thought that this is how it would be, because I know how little my Palatinate stomach can tolerate remedies. I told Frau von Rathsamshaussen literally how it would be; but because I did not want to be badgered, I preferred to do what people wanted, but still protested against it”).

⁵⁵ Cf. for example *Des Meisters Arnald von Villanova Parabeln der Heilkunst*, trans. P. DIEPGEN (Leipzig, 1922: *Klassiker der Medizin* 26; reprint Darmstadt, 1968), “Erste Doktrin: Regeln, welche die Seele des Arztes zu nützlichem Vorgehen instand setzen” (“First doctrine: Rules which stimulate the doctor to useful activity”), pp. 11-12: “*Wer die Natur der Körper, die Arten der Krankheiten, die Verschiedenheit ihrer Ursachen und die Kräfte seiner Hilfsmittel kennt, wird mit Überlegung behandeln und den Kranken mit seiner Kunst helfen. Die individuellen Eigenschaften der Körper, so weit sie der Heilung unterliegen, muß der Operierende kennen, obwohl sie sich nicht alle beschreiben lassen*” (“Those who are familiar with the nature of the body, types of illness, the variety of causes and the strength of its curative powers will treat with consideration and heal the sick with their skills. The operating physician must know the individual properties of the body, as far as they can be cured, although they cannot all be described”). Cf. for example To Luise, Marly, 30.06.1712, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 553, p. 284: “*Man kan auch nicht recht judiciren, waß woll undt übel; den die leiber seindt ebsenso unterschiedlich, alß die gesichter, waß einen woll bekompt, schadt dem andern.*” (“One cannot judge the right way, what is good and what is evil; because the bodies are as different as the faces, what is good for one does harm to the other”).

oneself from people in one's new environment. Accordingly, this distinction for Elisabeth Charlotte, especially in the early years at court, functioned principally as a demarcation that, towards the end of her life, became a virulently nostalgic declaration of her own origin.⁵⁶ The perception of general European court culture in the early modern period on the social level had to come to terms with clear differences on the semantic level of self-representation. Daughters of the nobility who were frequently married abroad showed a stronger cultural bond to their blood families than to those into which they had married.⁵⁷ In these life contexts the problem was a kind of dual socialisation requirement,⁵⁸ because family culture-determined segments within a social stratum posed different behaviour demands. This could be so different or so differently perceived that a decision in favour of a family culture was required. Unlike men, they are not always clearly assignable to only one family segment. In contexts such as these it is possible to assume a unity of personal and social 'identity' in pre-modern self-descriptions only to a limited extent. Unity of this sort has to be restored in loyalty conflicts through an active decision of where one is to be assigned to. Female self-understandings in the early modern period are, because of the patriarchally structured matrimony, by no means to be understood as a matter settled 'at birth'. In particular, marriage among the upper nobility on the structural level was a potential contingency moment for

⁵⁶ Cf. BROOKS, "Nostalgia", p. 11.

⁵⁷ Cf. D. NOLDE and C. OPITZ-BELAKHAL, "Kulturtransfer über Familienbeziehungen – eine einführende Überlegung", in: *Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen: Akteure und Medien des Kulturtransfers in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. D. NOLDE and C. OPITZ (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2008), pp. 1-14, at p. 10; K. SCHMITT, *Poetik der Montage: Figurenkonzeptionen und Intertextualität in der "Kudrun"* (Berlin, 2002: *Philologische Studien und Quellen* 174), p. 47. Following Luhmann, Schmitt maintains that affiliation of a person to a dynasty even in the medieval court romance is the "wesentliche Grundlage der Identitätskonstitution" [*the basis of identity construction*]. For women this creates a special problem, because patriarchal marriage, with its change from a family group or one social system to another, contains the experience of discontinuity.

⁵⁸ This would be the use of a socialising parallel concept to 'dual loyalty', which has been described in contexts of migration research cf. for example T. GEISEN, "Der Blick der Forschung auf Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund", in: *Jugend, Zugehörigkeit und Migration, Subjektpositionierung im Kontext von Jugendkultur, Ethnizitäts- und Geschlechtervorstellungen*, ed. C. RIEGEL and T. GEISEN (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 27-60, at p. 43. The concept was first used in Jewish migration history to describe the dual loyalty felt by Jews towards the newly founded State of Israel (1948) and the state in which they actually lived; cf. I. FREUND, *Diaspora und Israel: Das Problem der doppelten Loyalität: Im Auftrag der Jewish Agency* (Jerusalem, 1950).

women's biographies that required a certain 'work on identity' or on one's self-understanding.⁵⁹

It seems highly questionable whether Luhmann's thesis of pre-modern 'inclusion individuality' takes sufficient account of this aspect. In his article "Frauen, Männer und George Spencer Brown" (1988) he deals with the 'value' of the category of 'gender' in his analysis of society, and with it presents a critical assessment of women's and gender research.⁶⁰ He points out that in segmentary and stratified societies the primary differentiation, as a result of status affiliation, would be reinforced by gender differences. This means that the difference between man and woman in these societies macrostructurally corresponds to an asymmetry and thereby to a hierarchical order that enables men to appear as representatives of the system.⁶¹ There is thus no disagreement – at least for pre-modern societies⁶² – even with Luhmann, that the position of

⁵⁹ Cf. LUHMANN, "Identitätsgebrauch in selbstsubstitutiven Ordnungen", p. 322, who describes the conditions of *Identitätsgebrauch* ('identity use') as follows: "*Gebraucht wird Identität nur dann, wenn Situationen Verhaltenswahlen eröffnen und sich daraus, ob gewollt oder nicht, eine Kontingenz allen Anschlußverhaltens ergibt. Gleichgültig was man dann tut oder unterläßt, sichert Identität in solchen Fällen die Kontinuität trotz Wahl*" ("Identity is used only when situations open up behaviour choices and the result is, whether one wishes it or not, a contingency for all subsequent behaviour. Irrespective of what one then does or does not do, identity in such cases secures continuity despite choice"). Cf., on the connection between contingency and identity work, RENN and STRAUB, "Transitorische Identität", pp. 14 and 21; cf. also the late postmodern WINKER and DEGELE, *Intersektionalität*, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁰ Cf. N. LUHMANN, "Frauen, Männer und George Spencer Brown", *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 17 (1988), pp. 47-71.

⁶¹ Cf. LUHMANN, "Frauen, Männer und George Spencer Brown", pp. 52-53.

⁶² More questionable is Luhmann's position on the importance of gender in functionally differentiated societies. The transition from stratified to functional differentiation, accordingly, is accompanied by a loss of meaning of the category of 'gender', because functionally differentiated social systems are based precisely on the principle of guaranteeing to all the opportunity to have a stake by means of specific communication codes. The distinction between man and woman is then "*mit dem jeweiligen Schema gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung schlecht zu kombinieren*" ("difficult to combine with the appropriate scheme of social differentiation"). Social inequalities on the basis of gender affiliation would then play a role only on the levels of organisation of the function systems and social interaction, but no longer on the macrostructural level. Cf. LUHMANN, 'Frauen, Männer und George Spencer Brown', pp. 54-58 and 60-61 (quotation at pp. 54-55). K.U. HELLMANN, "1988 – und was nun? Eine Zwischenbilanz zum Verhältnis von Systemtheorie und Gender Studies", in: *Gender Studies und Systemtheorie: Studien zu einem Theorietransfer*, ed. S. KAMPMANN et al. (Bielefeld, 2004), pp. 17-46, at pp. 20-21; C. WEINBACH, "Systemtheorie und Gender: Geschlechtliche Ungleichheit in der functional ausdifferenzierten Gesellschaft", in: *Gender Studies und Systemtheorie*, pp. 47-76, at p. 51. Communication codes would then form the appropriate function-internal inclusion conditions, which could no longer be defined as function-external, that is by social class or gender affiliation.

the pre-modern individuals within society are to be defined only according to the relevant combination of stratum and gender affiliation.⁶³ But Luhmann has never included the results of this macrostructural reflection on gender among the assumptions about inclusion and exclusion individuality that are the specific modes of pre-modern and modern identities. However, in order to forestall a 'blind spot' that otherwise arises at this point, this seems more than necessary.⁶⁴ In this respect research on gendered self-understandings can point out to influences that structures are able to develop on (self-) positionings.

In a half-sentence on his thoughts about individuality Luhmann also points out the importance of nationally / regionally or otherwise organised spatial affiliations for the self-positioning of the pre-modern individual.⁶⁵ With particular reference to the early modern culture of the nobility and courts, there has been talk in historical research of an Europeanisation that consists of an acquisition of the cultural habits of the tone-setting models – towards the end of the seventeenth century the French royal court in Versailles.⁶⁶ According to this, the prevalent opinion is that 'national' cultural differences were not features, or not determining features, of the nobility. The letters of Elisabeth Charlotte and her relatives clearly show a different picture. When she moved to the French court, Elisabeth Charlotte found herself obliged by a letter from her father to adhere to the fundamentals of her upbringing and thus remain loyal to the Calvinist faith and the cultural habits of her own family.⁶⁷ She made her de-

⁶³ Cf. LUHMANN, "Frauen, Männer und George Spencer Brown", p. 55; WEINBACH, "Systemtheorie", p. 50.

⁶⁴ Cf. HELLMANN, "1988 – und was nun", p. 39.

⁶⁵ Cf. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", p. 178: "*In dieser Frage herrscht im 17. Jahrhundert noch die Meinung, das Individuum sei durch Beziehung auf andere zu bestimmen, vor allem durch seinen Geburtsstand, aber auch durch geographische Lokalisierung, durch Angabe seiner Nation, seiner Familie oder auch durch Hinweise auf Gefolgschafts- und Loyalitätsbindungen seiner Familie – alles Angaben, die das Individuum als stabil und als zuverlässig charakterisieren konnten*" ("Regarding this question, the opinion is still prevalent in the seventeenth cent. that the individual was to be determined through relationship with others, especially through his / her birth, but also geographical localisation, by specifying nation, family or other indications of retinue or loyalty ties of the family – all data that were able to characterise the individual as stable and reliable").

⁶⁶ Cf. for example W. DEMEL, "'European nobility' oder 'European nobilities'? Betrachtungen anhand genealogischer Verflechtungen innerhalb des europäischen Hochadels (ca. 1650-1800)", in: *Region – Territorium – Nationalstaat – Europa: Beiträge zu einer europäischen Geschichtslandschaft*, ed. W.D. GRÜNER and M. VÖLKEL (Rostock, 1998: *Rostocker Beiträge zur Deutschen und Europäischen Geschichte* 4), pp. 81-104, at pp. 102-103.

⁶⁷ Kurfürst Karl Ludwig to his daughter Elisabeth Charlotte, Heidelberg, 11.1671, in: *Briefwechsel der Herzogin Sophie von Hannover mit ihrem Bruder dem Kurfürsten Karl Ludwig von*

cision accordingly, and put up with conflicts in her new social environment. Being a member of one's own family and its varied culture, Elisabeth Charlotte increasingly expressed herself in a national rhetoric and thus was embedded in a larger social context that went beyond personal fate, and obviously offered a particularly attractive platform for the inclusion of one's own person. Taking this into account the segmentary (in its specific connections to status, gender, and nationality), seems to be the decisive category of self-positioning.

Bodily Practice in Gender-Related Difference

Elisabeth Charlotte also negotiates her self-understandings repeatedly and with particular emphasis with reference to ideas of 'successful' femininity and masculinity.⁶⁸ She primarily defined men and women in terms of social forms of behaviour. By referring to the brothers Louis and Philippe as an example, she differentiated as follows:

Der König und Mons. seel. sollte man in seinem Leben für keine Brüder gehalten haben. Der König war groß, mein Herr gar klein, er hatte lauter weibliche Inclinationen, liebte das Putzen, hatte Sorge für seinen Teint, liebte alle Weiber-Arbeit und Ceremonien. Der König war gantz contrair, fragte nicht nach Putzen, liebte die Jagd, das Schiessen, und hatte alle Inclinations von Mannsleuten, sprach gerne vom Kriege. Monsieur hielt sich wohl im Kriege, aber er sprach nicht davon. Monsieur liebte die Damen wie Gespielinnen, mochte immer bei ihnen seyn. Der König sahe die Damen gerne bei nahren, und nicht so in allen Ehren wie Monsieur;

der Pfalz und des Letzteren mit seiner Schwägerin, der Pfalzgräfin Anna, ed. E. BODEMANN (Leipzig, 1885: *Publicationen aus den k. Preußischen Staatsarchiven* 26; reprint Osnabrück, 1966), No. 27, p. 470: "Par la maniere don't vous avés vescu avec moy et par la tendresse que j'ay tousjours eue pour vous, je m'estois persuadé, Madame ma tres chere fille, que vous ne feriez jamais rien qui fut contraire à mes sentiment ni contre la verité, dont j'ay eu le soin de vous faire instruire, si vous ne croyez qu'un autre principe qui vous le put permettre" ("Because of the way in which you have lived with me and because of the tender feelings I have always had for you, my dear girl, I am convinced that you would never do anything that would run counter to my feelings or the truth, in which I have been careful to instruct you, such that you will not believe that another principle could allow you to do so").

⁶⁸ Cf. E. HOLZLEITHNER, "'Doing gender'", in: *Metzler Lexikon Gender Studies Geschlechterforschung: Ansätze – Personen – Grundbegriffe*, ed. R. KROLL (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2002), pp. 72-73. The concept of 'doing gender' comes from ethnomethodology and describes the production of gender identity in everyday social practice. This process does not necessarily have to be related to the hegemonial normative gender ideas, but can also be demarcated from this – for example in the case where a woman moves nearer to a male gender attribution.

*hatten sich doch sehr lieb, und waren possierlich bei einander zu sehen, vexierten einander recht artig und mit Verstand, wurden aber nie böß auf einander.*⁶⁹

The King and *M. seel.* should never be taken for brothers. The King was tall, my husband small and had feminine inclinations, liked grooming, was careful of his complexion, loved all women's work and ceremonies. The King was quite different, never required grooming, loved hunting, shooting and had all masculine tastes, and talked happily about war. My husband comported himself well in war, but never spoke about it. He liked women as companions, always wanted to be with them. The King liked to look at them close up, and not in such honourable circumstances as my husband. They loved each other and were sweet to each other, they teased each other politely but not excessively, and were never malicious to each other.

The only anatomical distinction made here is body size – otherwise Elisabeth Charlotte declares actions to be typically female (e.g. beauty care, love of toys and celebrations of all sorts) – or typically male (hunting, shooting, fondness of war). Elisabeth Charlotte's husband Philippe (*Monsieur*) is not deprived of his being a man because of his inclinations, but is moved to the female. Being a man is not defined per se, but in demarcation from the typically female. Using the example of war, Elisabeth Charlotte distinguished the 'real' man from the 'non-male'.⁷⁰ While Louis XIV was happy to speak of war, Philippe merely comported himself well. The 'real' man thus shows the passion necessary for his gender role and displays a certain satisfaction with his gender 'identity'. In her presentation of his sexual relationship with women she portrayed Philippe, undoubtedly in the light of his homosexuality,⁷¹ as 'unmanly'. The 'real' man does not surround himself with women as his reference group, but rather sees them as objects of desire. Even if this is ranked as less honourable behaviour, there is no doubt that this position represents the original 'man-

⁶⁹ Probably to Caroline Princess of Wales, 14.07.1719, in: *Elisabeth Charlotte von Orléans: Anekdoten vom Französischen Hofe vorzüglich aus den Zeiten Ludwigs des XIV. und des Duc Regent aus Briefen Madame d'Orléans Charlotte Elisabeth Herzog Philipp I. von Orleans Witwe: Welchen noch ein Versuch über die Masque de Fer beigefügt ist* (Strasburg, 1789), ed. M. MOOG-GRÜNEWALD (Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York, 2006), No. 46, p. 90.

⁷⁰ On the definition of masculinity that demarcates it from femininity and homosexuality cf. R.W. CONNELL, *Der gemachte Mann: Konstruktion und Krise von Männlichkeiten* (Wiesbaden, 2006: *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft* 8), pp. 99-100.

⁷¹ Referring to Philippe's homosexuality, with a psychoanalytical interpretation, see N. NICHOLS-BARKER, *Brother to the Sun King: Philippe, Duke of Orléans* (Baltimore and London, 1989), pp. 56-65.

ly' one and thus becomes exempt from a stricter criticism of virtuousness. Because of her very clearly formulated ideas one has to ask how she defined female virtuousness and located her own person in this respect.

The previously mentioned rhetoric of 'strength' and 'weakness', virtuousness and morality, as found in food items, becomes even more evident in forms of exercise. Keeping her body as healthy and strong as possible was for Elisabeth Charlotte a duty of being a person – and thus of being a woman – before God and oneself. An important element of her health programme was thus physical exercise in the form of long walks and participation in the parforce-hunt⁷² on horseback. So physical effort was to the fore – this can be seen from the statements in her letters about the amount of time spent on exercises or the quantity performed.⁷³ They were intended to make the body strong and resilient. This style of life was in direct contradiction to the femininity defined, though negatively assessed, in terms of beauty care and luxury.

In her letters she comes back repeatedly to the physical weakness in particular and chronic illness of French court ladies. She complains that they are the result of unhealthy habits. She described it as the "*frantzosche weiber naredey*" ("French women's foolishness")⁷⁴ that they make niches as dark and, in her opinion, stifling as possible to which they could withdraw during the day. Her own attitude and the conflicts generated by it with the ladies of her circle are described in a letter to her aunt from 1706:

⁷² Cf. W. RÖSENER, *Die Geschichte der Jagd: Kultur, Gesellschaft und Jagdwesen im Wandel der Zeit* (Düsseldorf and Zurich, 2004), pp. 281-285; U. PIRL, "Von mancherley Arten der Lust-Jagten und Jagt-Divertissements", in: *Die Lust am Jagen: Jagdsitten und Jagdfeste am kurpfälzischen Hof im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden Württemberg (Ubstadt-Weiher, 1999), pp. 33-42; C. HOLLBERG, "'Die Lust am Jagen' – Höfische Jagd vom 16. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert", in: *Hofjagd: Aus den Sammlungen des Deutschen Historischen Museums*, ed. G. QUASS (Wolftratshausen, 2002), pp. 8-27, at pp. 14-16.

⁷³ Cf., for example, To Louise, Fontainebleau, 22.09.1714, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 2, No. 665, p. 455: "*Ich glaube, daß, waß auch sehr zu meiner gesundtheit dint, ist die starcke bewegung, so ich hir [Fontainebleau, MB] habe; den 2 mahl die woch jagen wir, jedes mahl 2 hirsch, welches ordinari von 1 bis 6 wehrt; die andere tage gehe ich gar oft 2 mahl deß tags spatziren ...*" ("I think that what is also very serviceable to my health is the lively movement that I have here [Fontainebleau MB]; for we go hunting twice a week, each time two stags, which ordinarily lasts up to six hours; on the other days I often go on walks twice a day"); To Amelise, Versailles, 08.03.1701, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 125, pp. 217-218: "... *Donnerstag wider auff die wolffjagt; die wehrte 4 gantzer stunden undt mehr, aber ich fuhr nach 4 stunden nach hauß ...*" ("On Thursday wolf hunting again; it took more than four hours, but I went home after four hours").

⁷⁴ To Sophie, Marly, 13.11.1710, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 739, p. 258. Cf. also FORSTER, *Life*, p. 183: "The French women have this foolish craving ...".

*Es ist viel die mode hir, sich über die lufft zu beklagen; die princes de Conti mag gar nicht mehr gehen, geht nie spatziren, mad. d'Orléans auch nicht, undt brauchen allezeit purgiren, aderlaßen und sauerbrunnen badt, undt was noch ahm rarsten ist, sie ruffen all über meine gesundtheit. Ich sag ihnen alle tag, daß, wenn ich wie sie leben sollte, würde ich nicht allein kräncker werden wie sie, sondern auch daß ich gesundt bin, weillen ich nichts brauch undt offt in die lufft gehe undt mich bewege.*⁷⁵

It has become the fashion here to complain about the air; the Princess de Conti does not want to go out at all and never takes a walk, and neither does Madame d'Orléans; they are forever having purges, bleedings, acidulous water, and baths; and what is really exquisite is that they all keep oohing and aahing about my good health. I tell them every day that if I were to live as they do, I would be even sicker than they are, and also that I am healthy because I do not use any medicines and get a lot of fresh air and exercise.⁷⁶

Elisabeth Charlotte came up against the boundaries of the general ideas of being a woman particularly in her role as a passionate horsewoman and hunter. Physical exercise had basically male connotations in the early modern period, shown for example very clearly by literary representations of spontaneous gender metamorphoses after increased physical activity.⁷⁷ Women did take part in the court hunt, but only in riding costumes that were adapted to the contemporary masculine fashions.⁷⁸ A portrait of Elisabeth Charlotte wearing hunting costume, painted between 1673 and 1680 and ascribed to the Parisian artist Louis Ferdinand Elle,⁷⁹ emphasises this masculinity (see Fig. 1). Consider the

⁷⁵ To Sophie, Versailles, 01.08.1706, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 611, p. 140.

⁷⁶ FORSTER, *Life*, pp. 163-164.

⁷⁷ Cf. T. LAQUEUR, *Auf den Leib geschrieben: Die Inszenierung der Geschlechter von der Antike bis Freud* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), p. 20.

⁷⁸ Cf. J. ARNOLD, "Dashing amazones: The development of women's riding dress", in: *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*, ed. A. DE LA HAYE and E. WILSON (Manchester and New York, 1999), pp. 10-29, at p. 10.

⁷⁹ Cf. the date suggested by W. BROOKS, *Artists' Images and the Self-Descriptions of Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans (1652-1722), the Second Madame* (New York etc., 2007), pp. 134-136, who disputes the dating of S. PAAS, "Katalogbeschreibung Nr. 26", in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz: Madame am Hofe des Sonnenkönigs*, p. 245. Paas, however, reconsiders the date in "Katalogbeschreibung" in the same volume, in an essay in which she links the portrait with the visit of Sophie in 1679 to the French court. Later Sophie was to write that Liselotte was very fond of wearing hunting costume: Cf. S. PAAS, "Das 'bärenkatzenaffengesicht' der Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Bildnissen", in: *Liselotte von der Pfalz: Madame am Hofe des Sonnenkönigs*, pp. 65-93, at pp. 74 and 80.



Fig. 1 Louis Elle, Elisabeth Charlotte (Liselotte) of the Palatinate, Duchess of Orléans (1671-1721), in hunting dress (c. 1678). © Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin.

usual long wig,⁸⁰ the pointed cravat⁸¹ and the general masculine outer garments, the *just-au corps*,⁸² the plumed hat⁸³ and the leather gloves with wide cuffs⁸⁴ to the position of the hand, in a noticeably masculine gesture of the period,⁸⁵ with the exception of the long skirt that made it necessary for a woman to ride side-saddle, are all recognisably masculine elements.

If women took part in hunting, there was a social expectation attached to it, viz. that women, after the hunt itself, would revert to the form of traditional femininity in order not to question the fundamental gender order.⁸⁶ When Elisabeth Charlotte, however, began to identify herself with hunting and the clothing that was connected to it to such an extent that she wore hunting costume on other occasions or did not conscientiously change her dress,⁸⁷ it was taken as an affront. According to her aunt Sophie, who had visited the French court, people made a fuss over Elisabeth Charlotte's fondness for hunting costume because she was generally averse to behaving in what was considered a lady-like manner.⁸⁸ The hunt was to some degree diametrically opposed to the re-

⁸⁰ Cf. S. STOLZ, *Die Handwerke des Körpers: Bader, Barbier, Perückenmacher, Friseur: Folge und Ausdruck historischen Körperverständnisses* (Marburg, 1992), p. 162-167.

⁸¹ Cf. I. LOSCHEK, *Reclams Mode- und Kostümlexikon*, 4th edn. (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 326, s.v. "Krawatte".

⁸² Cf. LOSCHEK, *Mode- und Kostümlexikon*, p. 275, s.v. "Justaucorps".

⁸³ Cf. LOSCHEK, *Mode- und Kostümlexikon*, p. 381, s.v. "Plumage", and p. 184, s.v.: "Feder": "Zwischen 1670 und 1780 gebräuchlicher Federbesatz aus einer gespaltenen Straußenfeder, die den inneren Rand des Filzhutes mit rund aufgebogener Krempe säumte" ("Between 1670 and 1780 conventional plumage from a divided ostrich feather which bordered the inner edge of the felt hat with rounded brim").

⁸⁴ Cf. LOSCHEK, *Mode- und Kostümlexikon*, p. 234, s.v. "Handschuhe".

⁸⁵ Cf. A. MILLER, "Redressing classical statuary: The eighteenth-century "hand-in-waistcoat"-portrait", *The Art Bulletin* 77 (1995), pp. 45-63, at p. 53.

⁸⁶ Cf. FADERMAN, *Köstlicher als die Liebe der Männer: Romantische Freundschaft und Liebe zwischen Frauen von der Renaissance bis heute*, trans. F. DÜRLER and A. TENISCH (Zurich, 1990), p. 49: "Schon das geringste Anzeichen, daß eine Frau – oder ein Mann – die konventionelle Kleidung ablehnte, galt als Bedrohung, da es bedeutete, daß Frauen nicht mehr feminin (beherrscht) und Männer nicht mehr maskulin (beherrschend) waren" ("Even the slightest sign that a woman - or a man - refused to wear conventional clothing was perceived as a threat, because it meant that women were no longer feminine (dominated) and men no longer masculine (dominating)").

⁸⁷ Cf. BROOKS, *Images*, pp. 133-134.

⁸⁸ Sophie an Karl Ludwig, 24.08.1679, in: *Briefwechsel der Herzogin Sophie von Hannover mit ihrem Bruder dem Kurfürsten Karl Ludwig*, ed. BODEMANN, No. 373, p. 372: "Je trouve Madame engraissee et d'un humeur le plus agreable du monde; son habit de chasse luy va mieux que les autres, car elle n'aime pas trop à se mettre bien d'une autre manière, quoiqu'on en fasse une affaire icy" ("I find Madame filled out and with the most agreeable temper imaginable; her

quirements of female beauty,⁸⁹ but there were other negative effects on appearance associated with it. The result of long periods in the sun, Elisabeth Charlotte reports, was that her skin had become “*verdorben*” (“ruined”) and “*roth*” (“red”).⁹⁰ Thus she was moving, of course, far from the usual ideal of beauty that prescribed pure pale skin.⁹¹ However, it never occurred to her to put an end to the health-promoting activity of hunting for this reason. In her own idea of life, health had priority over beauty.

Nevertheless there were quite undesirable reactions by others in their perception of her person. In his memoirs the Duc de Saint Simon made the following criticism in his obituary of Elisabeth Charlotte: Her appearance and ‘peasant-like’ behaviour resembled that of the men in the king’s Swiss Guard, whose skin was just as sun-tanned.⁹² He was thus basically questioning her fulfilment of the role of noblewoman.

hunting costume suits her better than the others; for she does not like to dress in any other way, though one makes much of that here”). Cf. BROOKS, *Images*, pp. 132-134.

⁸⁹ Cf. V. NAHOUM-GRAPPE, “Die schöne Frau”, in: *Geschichte der Frauen*, 3, *Frühe Neuzeit*, ed. A. FARGE and N.Z. DAVIS (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 1994), pp. 103-118, at pp. 108-109: “Eine richtige Frau hatte sowohl ‘weiblich’ als auch ‘schön’ zu sein, sie stellte einen Idealtyp dar – im Weberschen Sinne, einen Typ reich an Bedeutungen” (“A real woman had to be both ‘feminine’ and ‘beautiful’, she represented an ideal type - in the Weberian sense, a type rich in significances”).

⁹⁰ To Sophie, Versailles, 17.09.1702, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 508, p. 50.

⁹¹ Cf. S.F.G. MATTHEWS GRIECO, “Körper, Äußere Erscheinung und Sexualität”, in *Geschichte der Frauen*, 3, pp. 61-101, at pp. 73 and 77.

⁹² Cf. *Saint-Simon. Mémoires*, 8, *Addition au Journal de Dangeau, 1721-1723*, ed. Y. COIRAUT (Paris, 1988: *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade* 350), p.553: “Madame tenait en tout beaucoup plus de l’homme que de la femme. Elle était forte, courageuse, allemande au dernier point, franche, doctre et bienfaisante, noble et grande en toutes ses manières et petite au dernier point sur tout ce qui regardait ce qui lui était dû. ... la figure et le rustre d’un suisse; capable avec cela d’une amitié tendre et inviolable” (“Madame had much more of the man than the woman. She was strong, courageous, totally German, frank, straight, kind, noble and great in all her manners and utterly modest in all that concerned what was due to her ... the figure and rustic bearing of a Swiss; capable withal of a friendship both affectionate and inviolable”). Cf. D. VAN DER CRUYSE, “Saint-Simon et Madame Palatine”, *Francia* 14 (1986), pp. 245-261, at pp. 257-258; S. PAAS, “Liselotte von der Pfalz: Leben neben dem Sonnenkönig”, in: *Frauen bei Hof*, ed. O. BORST (Tübingen, 1998: *Stuttgarter Symposium* 6), pp. 88-110, at p. 109, gives no reference, but is probably referring to Saint-Simon, when she writes that contemporaries had compared Liselotte’s appearance with that of the men in the Swiss Guard, whose skin similarly betrays evidence that they had spent time outdoors; T. LEITNER, *Skandal bei Hof: Frauenschicksale an europäischen Königshöfen* (Munich, 1995), p. 82, attributes this comparison to the court painter Hyacinth Rigaud without any evidence.

Partially consciously and deliberately, but misunderstood in her intentions, Elisabeth Charlotte was moving towards a male gender attribution through her physical exercises. For some contemporaries this may have been a matter of legitimate criticism. For Elisabeth Charlotte, however, it was the only possibility of keeping herself strong and healthy.

A corrective look back at the consumption of stimulants shows that she wanted to distance herself only from a specific and, in her view, negative kind of femininity – but by no means from being a woman in general. The image of a narcissistic woman surrounded by playthings and luxury, who subordinated everything to her appearance – merely to be fashionable – was not Elisabeth Charlotte's idea of femininity. Being a woman for her meant once again virtuousness in everyday concerns. Her criticism of women drinking alcohol and sniffing tobacco was not in the least subversive or even 'emancipatory'. The latter became fashionable around 1700 and is unanimously believed by historians to have gained substantial acceptance in court circles even among women.⁹³ Neither alcohol nor tobacco was healthy, according to Elisabeth Charlotte – she was even critical of men, such as her half-brother Karl Moritz, if they tended to excessive consumption of alcohol⁹⁴ or were given to using

⁹³ Cf. R. SANDGRUBER, *Bittersüße Genüsse: Kulturgeschichte der Genussmittel* (Vienna, Cologne, and Graz, 1986), p. 104; T. HENGARTNER, "Rauchbares", in: *Genussmittel: Eine Kulturgeschichte*, ed. T. HENGARTNER and C.M. MERKI (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig, 2001), pp. 191–220, at p. 202; U. SPIEKERMANN, "Das Deftige für den Mann, das Leichte für die Frau? Über den Zusammenhang von Ernährung und Geschlecht im 20. Jahrhundert", in: *Essen mit Leib und Seele: Theorie und Praxis einer ganzheitlichen Ernährung: Mit ausgewählten Rezepten*, ed. I. JAHN and U. VOIGT (Bremen, 2002: *Beiträge der Bremer Volkshochschule zur Erwachsenenbildung* 2), pp. 51–73, at p. 54. This impression is supported by the letters of Liselotte. In a letter to her half-sister (To Louise, Marly, 08.08.1715, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 2, No. 720, p. 604) she objected to the fact that young girls were allowed to consume tobacco: "Wie hatt der duc de Schomburg seiner elsten dochter erlaubt, schnupfftaback zu schnupffen? Es ist nichts heßlicher". ("How could the Duc de Schomburg allow his daughter to sniff tobacco? There is nothing more repellent").

⁹⁴ Cf. To Sophie, Versailles, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 493, p. 36: "Ich wolte aber gern, daß Carl Moritz nicht so viel sößte: ich glaube, daß das sauffen, so ihm mad. Gregu in seiner kindheit gelernt, schuldig ist, daß er so klein geblieben alß wie die hündtger, welchen man in ihrer jugendt brandewein eingibt, umb sie klein zu behalten" ("I would like Carl Moritz not to drink so much: I believe drinking, taught to him in childhood by Mme Gregu, is responsible for his being so small, just as dogs are given brandy when young to keep them small"). Cf. *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 1, p. 399, n. 3 "–Gregut= die Frau eines Pfarrers der französ. Gemeinde zu Heidelberg, bei welchem der Raugr. Karl Moritz nach dem Tode seiner Mutter in Pension war" ("Mme Gregut was the wife of a priest of the French community in Heidelberg, with whom the Raugr. Karl Moritz went to live after the death of his mother"). To Amelise, Marly, 12.07.1702, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 175, p. 296: "Madame Gregu hatt

tobacco.⁹⁵ In the general drinking discourse of the early modern period particular emphasis was placed on the loss of self-control that came with the consumption of alcohol. In the case of women, however, the unrestrained behaviour induced by alcohol was considered particularly reprehensible.⁹⁶ In 1702 Elisabeth Charlotte wrote to her aunt:

Sauffen wird hir im landt erschrecklich gemein unter die weiber von qualitet; alle tage hört man schir von einer, so im vollsein waß begegnet ist. Kürztlich hatten sich 5 voll undt doll miteinander gesoffen undt wie sie nicht mehr gewust, was sie thun wollten, haben sie eine, so am vollsten war, genohmen, sie auff den boden gelegt undt mitt ihren füßen, so sie in die höhe gehoben, auff undt zu geschlagen,

ihn umbs leben gebracht, ihn so an den wein gewondt zu haben in seiner kindtheit. Ich weiß, daß er wie ein rechter philosoph mitt großer fermeté gestorben ist ("Mme Gregu killed him by getting him used to wine in his childhood. I know that he died like a philosopher with great steadfastness"); To Amelise, Versailles, 08.03.1701, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 1, No. 125, pp. 218-219: "*Ich fürchte, er [Carl Moritz] drinckt zu viel, undt daß ist den augen sehr schädlich*" ("I fear that he [Carl Moritz] drinks too much, and this is bad for the eyes". Cf. M. KNEBEL, *Liselottes Verwandte: Der weitverzweigte Stammbaum der Liselotte von der Pfalz*, 2nd edn. (Weinheim, 1995), pp. 85-87.

⁹⁵ To Frau von Harling, Fontainebleau, 10.11.1700, *Liselotte von der Pfalz in ihren Harling-Briefen*, ed. HELFER, No. 167, p. 299: "... *da kompt Harling alleweil herein undt ich filtz in braff, daß er die naß zu voller taback hatt – den ich mag den taback nicht leyden; Glaube nicht – daß er mir so baldt mitt der tabacks[-]naß wirdt ahngestrichen kommen*" ("Harling comes in all the time, and I complain that his nose is full of tobacco, because I cannot stand tobacco. Do not think he will come back too soon with his tobacco-nose").

⁹⁶ Cf. W. PULZ, "Frauen und Männer – Fasten und Völlen? Geschlechterdifferenz und außergewöhnliches Eßverhalten in der Frühen Neuzeit", in: *Männlich – Weiblich: Zur Bedeutung der Kategorie Geschlecht in der Kultur. 31. Kongreß der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, Marburg 1997*, ed. C. KÖHLE-HEZINGER et al. (Münster etc., 1997), pp. 209-223, at pp. 212-216; M. FRANK, "Trunkene Männern und nüchterne Frauen: Zur Gefährdung von Geschlechterrollen durch Alkohol in der Frühen Neuzeit", in: *Hausväter, Priester und Kastraten: Zur Konstruktion von Männlichkeit in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. M. DINGES (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 187-212, at pp. 196-198 and 200; B.A. TLUSTY, *Bacchus and the Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville and London, 2001: *Studies in Early Modern German History*), pp. 115-146; EAD., "Crossing gender boundaries: Woman as druncards in early modern Augsburg", in: *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit: Identitäten und Abgrenzungen*, ed. S. BACKMANN et al. (Berlin, 1998: *Colloquia Augustana* 8), pp. 185-197, at p. 194: "Although drunkenness brings honor to none, it shames a woman more than a man"; L. ROPER, *Ödipus und der Teufel: Körper und Psyche in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), pp. 115-117; on Roper's interpretation of typical male drinking practice cf. critical and supplementary: M. DINGES, "Ehre und Geschlecht in der Frühen Neuzeit", in: *Ehrkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 123-147, at pp. 127-128 and p. 140. All authors point to the drinking competitions between men in public space as a ritual that was constitutive of the creation of accepted masculinity.

*haben sie einen blaßbalgt von ihr gemacht. Ich glaub aber, daß der windt von dießem blaßbalgt nicht woll roche.*⁹⁷

Drinking here is frighteningly common among women of quality; every day one hears stories of what has happened to those who are drunk. Recently 5 women had drunk themselves into a stupor and, as they no longer knew what they were doing, they took one of them, the drunkest, and laid her on the floor with her feet uplifted and opened and closed her legs, that she became like a bellows. But I think the air that came out of the bellows did not smell good.

This passage shows clearly that Elisabeth Charlotte was afraid that women who drank would lose their socially based inhibitions. Uncontrolled and unrestrained behaviour under the influence of alcohol was able to make women in particular into playthings and thus objects of ridicule⁹⁸ to court society.⁹⁹ The conduct in the example cited further points, at least implicitly, to lasciviousness, as the woman with her involuntary movements had to have allowed a glimpse of the bodily location of sexual honour.¹⁰⁰

With reference to the behaviour of sniffing women she goes, in more concrete detail, into what she considers undesirable changes in the gender order.¹⁰¹ In a letter from 1700 she once again reports to her aunt:

*Daß männer taback schnauffen ist heßlich zwar undt unsauber, daß man aber weiber durch die naß hört reden, weill sie die naß voll taback haben undt die finger stehts in der männer tabacktiere stecken, das kompt mir abscheulich vor, undt es ist nichts gemeiners jetzt hir.*¹⁰²

⁹⁷ To Sophie, Versailles, 14.02.1704, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 527, p. 70.

⁹⁸ Cf. TLUSTY, "Crossing gender boundaries", p. 190.

⁹⁹ Ideas of honour are always related to more or less 'public', social contexts. At court the spheres of the private and the public became more strongly indistinguishable from each other than in other early modern period life worlds. Cf. S. BURGHARTZ, "Rechte Jungfrauen oder unverschämte Töchter? Zur weiblichen Ehre im 16. Jahrhundert", in: *Frauengeschichte – Geschlechtergeschichte*, ed. K. HAUSEN and H. WUNDER (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 1992: *Geschichte und Geschlechter* 1), pp. 173–183, at p. 173; S. RUPPEL, "'Das Pfand und Band aller Handlungen' – Der höfische Brief als Medium kulturellen Austauschs", in: *Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen*, pp. 211–223, at p. 214.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. DINGES, "Ehre", p. 135.

¹⁰¹ Cf. TLUSTY, "Crossing gender boundaries", pp. 186–187: "Drunkenness for a woman was not only an encroachment on male territory that could bring her into disrepute; symbolically, it represented an inversion of the gender hierarchy and therefore a perversion of sexually-defined notions of honor".

¹⁰² To Sophie, St. Cloud, 04.07.1700, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 1, No. 417,

That men sniff tobacco is repellent indeed and unclean, but that women can be heard speaking through their nose because their nose is full of tobacco and their finger is stuck in the man's snuff box, this I find revolting, and there is now nothing more common here.

Here, too, the line of argumentation is clear: it is certainly unhygienic and thus also unhealthy for men to sniff tobacco, but for women it is positively disgusting. It is 'indecorous' when women's noses are full of tobacco – and especially when they put their fingers into the man's snuff box,¹⁰³ which is perhaps another way of saying: when women put their noses into men's affairs, for which the snuff box is a metaphor. This female openness might also have a sexual component, which Elisabeth Charlotte understood as 'unvirtuous' and 'unchaste' because it was the woman who was making the first move.¹⁰⁴ The contemporary female ideas of honour, according to which women rendered themselves open to the charge of harlotry if they were the instigators of sexual provocation,¹⁰⁵ were difficult to reconcile, in Elisabeth Charlotte's view, with the behaviour of sniffing women. In a letter to her aunt, written in 1706, she observed pithily that the ladies with their drinking and sniffing were becoming "*zu verachtliche creaturen itzunder*" ("despicable creatures nowadays") – she would not be surprised if this was the reason why men despised women.¹⁰⁶

The clear ambivalence in Elisabeth Charlotte's assessment of prototypical femininity, in my opinion, follows an internally coherent principle. When she believed something to be healthy and when it corresponded to her moral concept of life – for example physical exercise – she tended towards male practices and condemned 'female weakness'. In the case of unhealthy bodily practices, such as the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, she insisted on the traditional ideas associated with femininity and distanced herself as firmly from practices that tended towards assimilation, and questioned the traditional gen-

pp. 405-406.

¹⁰³ Cf. SANDGRUBER, *Genüsse*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁰⁴ One can find similar argumentation on the common drinking of men and women cf. TLUSTY, "Crossing gender boundaries", p. 194: "No other questionable behaviour was necessary to raise suspicion, for the shared drink implied social intimacy".

¹⁰⁵ Cf. BURGHARTZ, "Rechte Jungfrauen oder unverschämte Töchter", pp. 174-175 and 180-181; DINGES, "Ehre", p. 138; TLUSTY, "Crossing gender boundaries", pp. 186 and 195-196; TLUSTY, *Bacchus*, pp. 136-137; K. NORBERG, "Prostitution", in *Geschichte der Frauen*, 3, pp. 474-492, p. 479.

¹⁰⁶ To Sophie, Versailles, 01.08. 1706, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 611, pp. 140-141.

der roles as she had previously laid claim to and defended gender-specific freedom of action.

Bodily Practices and Status Distinction

Elisabeth Charlotte treated questions of status honour with direct reference to these gender-related ideas. Status affiliation, however, remained for her an untreated topic until cracks began to appear between the nobility and the Third Estate (*Dritter Stand*), and the question of an inner stratificational self-definition of nobility became more urgent – which for Luhmann is a sign of self-dissolving hierarchical stratification, representing the onset of functional differentiation.¹⁰⁷ This was the background against which Elisabeth Charlotte assessed people and produced affiliations and exclusions on the basis of a strict distinction between old and royally ennobled nobility.¹⁰⁸ At the court of Louis XIV Elisabeth Charlotte often came into contact with people who had moved upwards in terms of status.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly it was precisely health-related behaviour by which she measured women, especially mistresses and their illegitimate children.

The inner-stratificational gender-related demarcation model was something she had in common in particular with her aunt Sophie. In several letters from December 1710 these questions were discussed on the subject of Eléonore d'Olbreuse, the daughter of a Huguenot aristocrat.¹¹⁰ In 1676 Sophie's brother-in-law, Georg Ludwig von Zelle, had married his long-time mistress Eléonore. This relationship meant an affront to Sophie's pride of her own status and her political ambitions. Georg Ludwig had been childless up to that time and had already foregone his claim to inheritance in favour of his younger brother,

¹⁰⁷ Cf. LUHMANN, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, p. 712.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. P. MÜNCH, *Lebensformen in der Frühen Neuzeit 1500-1800* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ On the practice of ennoblement cf. R.G. ASCH, *Europäischer Adel in der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine Einführung* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2008), pp. 14-17.

¹¹⁰ Cf. R. DU VINAGE, *Ein vortreffliches Frauenzimmer: Das Schicksal von Éléonore Desmier d'Olbreuse (1639-1722) der letzten Herzogin von Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Celle* (Berlin, 2000), p. 10; D. NOLDE, "Eléonore Desmier d'Olbreuse (1639-1722) am Celler Hof als diplomatische, religiöse und kulturelle Mittlerin", in: *Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen*, pp. 107-118.

Sophie's husband.¹¹¹ Elisabeth Charlotte made the following sympathetic comments on the stories of her aunt about Eléonore's health behaviour:

*Die hertzogin von Zelle [Eleonore, MB] könnte sich auch woll eine nische machen laßen, wie made de Maintenon, umb ohne lufft zu sein; ... Es ist kein wunder mitt dem leben, das die hertzogin von Zelle führt, daß sie Schwindel hatt, das kan nicht anderst sein.*¹¹²

The Duchess of Zelle [Eléonore, MB] might also have a niche made for herself, like Mme de Maintenon, to be without air ... It is no wonder with the life the Duchess leads that she has vertigo. It cannot be otherwise.

This example shows how much, in their correspondence about their attitude to body and health, aunt and niece distanced themselves from other ways of female life at court. Criticism of the health behaviour of court ladies, whose status could not be justified by their origins, thus offers an important moment in the assessment of courtly gender conceptions. In trying to compare the practices of Madame de Maintenon, a mistress of Louis XIV, to Eléonore's, she inserts these also into a demarcation model. The adjunctions 'French', 'female', and 'outside her rank' become synonymous with 'unhealthy' and 'irresponsible'.

The same was true of the bodily practices of her daughter-in-law, Madame d'Orléans. She was an illegitimate daughter of Louis XIV and his mistress, Madame de Montespan. At the King's request, the marriage took place in 1692 without Elisabeth Charlotte's agreement. Liselotte's daughter-in-law, whom she considered outside her rank, indulged in a particularly unhealthy lifestyle, because she spent practically all day lying down.¹¹³ The inevitable result was, in Elisabeth Charlotte's view, a tendency to illness and physical weakness. Elisabeth Charlotte went even further: health behaviour of this sort inevitably must lead not only to all kinds of illness but to deleterious effects on the health of the children.¹¹⁴ Maintaining one's own health and inculcating a useful atti-

¹¹¹ Cf. NOLDE, "Eléonore Desmier d'Olbreuse (1639-1722)", p. 107-109; DU VINAGE, *Ein vortreffliches Frauenzimmer*, pp. 32-52.

¹¹² To Sophie, Marly, 13.11.1710, in: *Aus den Briefen*, ed. BODEMANN, 2, No. 739, p. 258.

¹¹³ Cf. for example To Louise, Versailles, 17.04.1718, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 3, No. 907, p. 238; probably To Caroline Princess of Wales, 05.07.1716, *Anekdoten*, No. 4, p. 313; probably To Caroline Princess of Wales 04.11.1718, *Anekdoten*, No. 27, p. 318.

¹¹⁴ Cf. To Louise, Paris, 17.04.1718, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 3, No. 907, p. 238: "Sie [Madame d'Orléans, MB] spilt ligendt, sie speist ligendt, sie list ligendt, suma, ihr meistes leben

tude towards health in one's children thus appears here as the obligation of the noblewoman within the framework of a family association that lays claim to authority.

Elisabeth Charlotte saw her view confirmed. Her granddaughter also, a daughter of her son and unloved daughter-in-law, displayed a health behaviour that was anything but exemplary. In July 1719 the Duchesse de Berry died aged 24 – as Elisabeth Charlotte had predicted. The reason was not difficult to find: the family dispositions of her granddaughter had led to an unceasing pathological compulsion to eat. Elisabeth Charlotte writes:

*Es ist kein wunder, daß mein[es] sohn[es] ... gemahlin undt kinder große kranckheiten außstehen; sie seindt gar zu freßig, können sich nicht zwingen. Ich habe woll allezeit geförcht, daß, wen eines von ihnen kranck wirdt werden, daß es eine abscheüliche kranckheit werden würde, wie wir nun sehen.*¹¹⁵

It's no wonder that my son's wife and children keep getting ill; they are too gluttonous and have no self-restraint. I have always been afraid that if one of them becomes ill, it would be a terrible illness, as we now see.

By assessing bodily practices she created distance from her own person and her self-understanding as the daughter of a Prince-Elector of high birth. Dietary self-care and self-control thus function as a mode of self-reassurance of personal self-understanding related to the honour of status.

Conclusion

On the basis of the concrete body and health practices Elisabeth Charlotte writes about in her letters it can be maintained that at the level of 'identity'

bringt sie ligendt zu, daß kan nicht gesundt sein; auch ist sie allezeit krank schier, denn klagt sie den kopff, einen andern tag den magen, es fehlt gar oft etwas. Daß kan ja keine gesunde kinder machen; jedoch so seindt die 3 älsten dochter gesundt undt starck, die erste undt 3 gar dick undt groß, seindt menschen wie bäum, insonderheit mademoiselle de Valois" ("She [Mme d'Orléans] plays lying down, eats lying down, reads lying down. In short, she spends most of her life lying down, so that it is impossible for her to be healthy. She is ill all the time, one day blaming the head, another day the stomach. There is often something wrong with her. She cannot possibly have healthy children, but the three eldest daughters are healthy and strong, the first and third sturdy and tall, like trees, especially Mlle de Valois").

¹¹⁵ To Louise, St. Cloud, 13.05.1719, in: *Briefe*, ed. HOLLAND, 4, No.1018, p. 115.

construction or personal self-understandings a variety of different categories were drawn up to position of the 'I', which are by no means exhausted by addressing the subject of status affiliation. Being an aristocrat in her early years at the French court is an unquestioned prerequisite for Elisabeth Charlotte and as such is not addressed explicitly by her, but this changes drastically when, in the years after the marriage of her son in 1692, at court she increasingly comes into contact with people who, in her view, do not behave in accordance with their status. The general dissolution of stratified society at the structural level of institutionalised regulations, such as ennoblement through marriage, has decisive effects on the processes of (self-) positioning in Elisabeth Charlotte's letters. In this phase of life she makes increasing efforts to assure herself of her social position as a high-born aristocrat. She was able to determine this social self-definition, however, only through idealised femininity and 'being German'. The association of virtue with the source concept of 'reason' and health played an important role in this respect. The *richtige* ('real') German, the 'real' woman, the 'real high aristocrat' was in principle personally responsible for her health in order to be 'strong', honest and virtuous, and thus can be conceived as a meaningful part of a 'good' society. Keeping the body healthy and strong was thus a lifelong task – being healthy was an 'identity anchor', a mode of self-positioning and social demarcation. Ideas of national, gender, and status-specific differences are arranged in an integrative model to distinguish health and virtue from illness and lack of virtue. Elisabeth Charlotte's social position is, moreover, formally inscribed in her body (e.g. with reference to her *teütsch* ('German') stomach) and is at the same time updated when each day she writes about body and health practices.

Elisabeth Charlotte found the reference framework for her ideas of the 'real' self outside of where she actually lived, in her capacity to remember and in her written dialogues. In this writing situation she constructed an extremely self-related 'I', which required letter conversations with her distant reference group as a stabiliser. Introspection and self-justification of her views, for example in a diary intended only for herself, would have been difficult to sustain over the long period covered by the letters. Despite all self-references in the problematic writing and living situation, reference to those addressed and the resulting positioning within the social field is the central mode of self-reassurance in the letters of Elisabeth Charlotte.

Luhmann's concept of 'inclusion individuality' seems to characterise fairly accurately the material under discussion, as Elisabeth Charlotte was trying with

the greatest difficulty to 'include' her person. Everything she wrote was aimed at informing the recipients of her letters that she still lived according to the rules and cultural practices of her family reference group – and through all of her biographical changes she remained essentially the same. Such an active 'identity work', such an intensive examination of oneself and one's social position is hardly conceivable in a space of a stable, non-contingent course of life assigned through birth, which time and again is assumed for the pre-modern. Examination of female migration 'identities' such as that of Elisabeth Charlotte shows clearly that biographies can easily be studded with contradictory moments of contingency. Research on ego-documents ought, in my opinion, work out more clearly and more systematically what the assignation decisions to particular family-cultural reference systems in the nobility actually looked like, how conflicts were dealt with or solved. From the case study of Elisabeth Charlotte one may also ask how feelings of family origin and national affiliation work together in processes of (self-) positioning.

For a general theory of the connection between social structure and personal self-understandings one may conclude with the critical observation that historical research has focussed, in the wake of so-called *Sattelzeit* theses, too strongly on the period 1750-1850. However, the process of modernisation and individualisation, in Luhmann's terms the change from inclusion to exclusion individuality, can hardly be grasped and explained by such a research design. One therefore ought to look more closely at the second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, and ask what social structural processes of an inchoative differentiation (e.g. crumbling demarcation lines between the strata) are reflected at the level of self-understandings of social actors. In addition to a clear distinction of the levels of enquiry, a coherent analysis of various intersecting categories of self-positioning and positioning by others, as suggested by the example of Elisabeth Charlotte, with status, gender, and nationality, is urgently necessary.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ On the discussions on 'intersectionality' cf. for example K. DAVIS, "Intersectionality in transatlantic perspective", in: *ÜberKreuzungen: Fremdheit, Ungleichheit, Differenz*, ed. G.-A. Knapp and C. KLINGER (Münster, 2008), pp. 19-35; L. MCCALL, "The complexity of intersectionality", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30.3 (2005), pp. 1771-1800; I. KERNER, "Alles intersektional? Zum Verhältnis von Rassismus und Sexismus", *Feministische Studien* 1 (2009), pp. 36-50; G.-A. KNAPP, "'Intersectional invisibility': Anknüpfungen und Rückfragen an ein Konzept der Intersektionalitätsforschung", in: *Fokus Intersektionalität: Bewegungen und Verortungen eines vielschichtigen Konzepts*, ed. H. LUTZ et al. (Heidelberg, 2010: *Gesellschaft und Geschlecht* 14), pp. 223-235; WINKER and DEGELE, *Intersektionalität*. Cf. M. BÖTH, "Verflochtene Positionierungen: Eine intersektionale Analyse frühneuzeitlicher Selbstbildungspro-

Possible further turning points in the course of history where ‘identity’ descriptions perhaps change parallel to the social structure so far have not been in the focus of systematic analysis. The undoubtedly significant threshold of the early modern period seems to me to be one-sidedly focussed on the debates. Ulrich Beck’s thesis of individualisation, for example, according to which biographical identities in the Federal Republic of the 1980s are for the first time “*jenseits von Klasse und Schicht*” (“beyond class and stratum”),¹¹⁷ ought to be included in a process of reflection on social structural change, positioning semantics and self-understandings in historical change. This might help to sharpen one’s focus on the characteristics of other epochs.

zesse”, in: *Intersektionalität und Forschungspraxis: Wechselseitige Herausforderungen*, ed. M. BERESWILL, F. DEGENRING, and S. STANGE (Münster, 2015), pp. 78-95.

¹¹⁷ Cf. U. BECK, *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), esp. pp. 121-130.

Loci of Medieval Individuality: A Methodological Inquiry*

BRIGITTE M. BEDOS-REZAK

Introduction

The Renaissance has been heralded as the cradle of western individuality, with the new-born individual seen as the wilful, rational and autonomous protagonist of modernity.¹

* I wish to thank Professor Franz-Josef Arlinghaus for introducing me to systems theory and to the work of Niklas Luhmann, and for recommending the essays by C. BOHN and A. HAHN, "Patterns of inclusion and exclusion: Property, nation, and religion", *Soziale Systeme* 8.1 (2002), pp. 8-26, and R. STICHWEH, "Stranger, inclusion, and identity", *Soziale Systeme* 8.1 (2002), pp. 101-110. That I came to develop some reservations in this essay about systems theory results from my own exposure to its critique and understanding of its implications.

¹ The bibliography devoted to pre-modern individuality, its nature, birth, growth, its reality or in/non-existence, to the lexicon of individuality, and to forms of individuation is extensive. I will limit references here and throughout the essay to studies that have particular bearing on my argument. The argument of C.M. MORRIS, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (Toronto, 1987) that individuality was a twelfth-century discovery is challenged by C.W. BYNUM, "Did the twelfth century discover the individual", in: EAD., *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 82-109; Morris' response to Bynum appeared in C.M. MORRIS, "Individualism in twelfth-century religion: Some further reflections", *Journal of*

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Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 81-106.

Debates about the modern self and modern individuality lack the simple and targeted clarity of those lavished on the man of the Renaissance. When dealing with the modern individual, analyses are diverse, informed, and to some extent overdetermined by the historiographical trends and theoretical epistemologies of the disciplines within which they take place, such as sociology, history, philosophy, psychology, and biology. Nevertheless, a common teleology animates these debates, all of which posit the growth and development of the subjective self as the agent of destiny. Quite commonly, the story of modern individual agency selects as background a medieval age in which collective consciousness and corporate structures are held to have been the dominant operative agents.²

As for the postmodern Ego, it has not fared as well as the Ego of modernity. Again, analyses vary according to the discipline of reference, a category now expanded to include the neurosciences. Nevertheless, one trend is noteworthy: from Michel Foucault (1926-1984) to Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), from Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) to Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998), from Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) to Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998), arguments conclude with the dissolution of the self as an effective centre of consciousness and performance. It is a remarkable point of convergence between post-

Ecclesiastical History 31(1980), pp. 195-206; J.-Cl. SCHMITT, "La découverte de l'individu: Une fiction historiographique?", in: *La fabrique, la figure et la feinte: Fictions et statut des fictions en psychologie*, ed. P. MENGAL and F. PAROT (Paris, 1989), pp. 213-236, reprinted in ID., *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps: Essais d'anthropologie médiévale* (Paris, 2001), pp. 241-262; A. GUREVICH, *The Origins of European Individualism* (Oxford, 1995); P. BOURDIEU, "Postface", in: E. PANOFKY, *Architecture gothique et pensée scolastique* (Paris, 1967), pp. 133-167; *L'Individu au Moyen Âge: Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*, ed. B.M. BEDOS-REZAK and D. IOGNA-PRAT (Paris, 2005); J. BURCKHARDT, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S.G.C. MIDDLEMORE (Harmondsworth, 1990); J.J. MARTIN, "Inventing sincerity, refashioning prudence: The discovery of the individual in Renaissance Europe", *American Historical Review* 102.5 (1997), pp. 1309-1342, proposes a new reading of Renaissance individualism that revises the New Historicist concept of self-fashioning developed by S. GREENBLATT, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1983); J.J. MARTIN, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (New York, 2004); T.J. REISS, *Mirages of the Self: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and early Modern Europe* (Stanford, 2003).

² Only a selective bibliography concerning the modern individual can be offered here: L. DUMONT, *Essais sur l'individualisme: Une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne* (Paris, 1993); *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T.C. HELLER, M. SOSNA, and D.E. WELLBERY (Stanford, 1986); J. SEIGEL, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 2005); C. TAYLOR, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1989); D. ZAHAVI, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

structuralism, deconstruction, and systems theory that they all challenge the concepts of subject and of individual agency.³ The Cartesian, rational individual of modernity has been ousted by the determinative agencies of structure, language, and system.

Modernity is now a middle age, bracketed by preceding and subsequent epochs of non-individualism. Luhmann commented that in medieval as in post-modern times, stereotypes were sufficient to identify the characters of a story: the beautiful young and noble widow in medieval narratives; the characters of soap operas, or Batman and Spiderman, for the postmodern audience.⁴ One might therefore expect that the reigning teleology explaining the emergence of the individual as a centred agent would lose its meaning in current analyses. Indeed, considerations of Ego / I within the conceptual space defined by notions of self-reference and hetero-reference suggest such an interpretive realignment.

However, the self – other tandem itself implies a host of assumptions, which must be brought into the open, lest their ghosts haunt the question of individuality with limiting implications. Therefore, the first purpose of this essay is to examine the framework implied by the dichotomy of self and other, and to consider the ways in which this formulation inflects approaches to the question of the individual. Since the framework itself is inspired by systems theory in its elaboration by Niklas Luhmann, I also propose to review briefly Luhmann's theoretical models with attention to their import for the historical sciences and for medieval history in particular.⁵ This will lead to broader considerations, including an inquiry into the relevance of theory as a historically situated phenomenon.

In the second part of this essay, I will turn to my own area of specialisation, the western Middle Ages during the long twelfth century (1050-1250). My basic perspective on individuality is as a value that is independent of, albeit interactive with, the discrete physical condition constitutive of each human

³ In addition to the works cited in note 2, see: M. FOUCAULT, *L'herméneutique du sujet* (Paris, 2001); J.-Cl. KAUFMANN, *Ego: Pour une sociologie de l'individu* (Paris, 2001); P. RICŒUR, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris, 1990); *The Self in Neurosciences and Psychiatry*, ed. T. KIRCHER and A. DAVID (Cambridge, 2003); N. LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference* (New York, 1990); *L'individualité, objet problématique des sciences humaines et sociales*, ed. G. VIEILLE-MARCHISET (= *Revue Interrogations* 5 (2007)).

⁴ LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference*, pp. 103-105.

⁵ This essay does not pretend to rest upon a comprehensive mastery of Luhmann's prodigious output and complex theoretical thinking. The limited goal here is to try to assess the ways in which the tenets of systems theory affect historical analyses of the individual.

being. My method will involve a hermeneutic that retains the practical significance of medieval theoretical thinking about Ego. Specifically, I will consider the distinction between the human and the non-human, so as to connect the concept of individuality with both objects and material techniques of individuation. The traditional focus on anthropocentric forms of personal reference, such as group, class, and society, may have obscured some of the ways in which material operations enable personal reference to be achieved by multiplication of the body and distribution of personality. In considering concretely the ways in which the medieval individual was unable fully to enter his own self-description, I will argue for a dialectical tension between mutually constitutive meaning-producing entities and thus for the agency of both Ego and systemic codes. The conceptual structure claimed by Ego / I as the system of truth enabling understanding cannot be the system grounding that claim. This conundrum applies to systems as well: they cannot achieve simultaneous moments of self-identity and presence.⁶ Luhmann was well aware of this fact in positing binary distinction, difference, as a controlling device of his theoretical formulations.

Self-Reference and Hetero-Reference

From a general perspective, the concepts of self- and hetero-reference are predicated upon their binary relationship, so that the individual emerges as an entity among only two referential possibilities, either self or other. This relationship also involves a polar opposition, in the sense that self and other achieve meaning by reference of one to the other.⁷ This polarity, in turn, is further expanded temporally, separating the pre-modern from the modern age on the grounds that the Ego category emerges out of and is contingent upon situated interactions between psychic and social systems⁸ – yet a third polarity.

Systems theorists situate the hetero-referenced individual in the pre-modern period, positing that the identity of pre-modern individuals was fused with their place within hierarchical strata. The twenty-first century individual,

⁶ Formulation derived from W. RAY, *Literary Meaning: From Phenomenology to Deconstruction* (Oxford, 1991), p. 210.

⁷ G. WAGNER, "The end of Luhmann's social systems theory", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 27 (1997), pp. 387-409, at pp. 392, 397.

⁸ H.U. GUMBRECHT, "A farewell to interpretation", in: *Materialities of Communication*, ed. H.U. GUMBRECHT and K.L. PFEIFFER (Stanford, 1994), pp. 389-402, at pp. 398-400.

whose identification with each of the multiple functions offered by society can only be partial, is thus considered to be self-referential in the sense that he becomes the sole source as well as locus of his identity.⁹ Such individuality, however, is cancelled by the logic of self-reference, for contemporary self-reference is not considered to be an effect of subjective reason, as it was during the Enlightenment and thereafter. The self-reference of systems theory is a closed system, which defines itself via the detour of communication, that is, by participation in another, completely different, system whose attractiveness resides in its constitutive difference.¹⁰ Since, however, Luhmann postulates that individuals cannot communicate with society, he proposes that the unity of the one is a given function within the system of the other.¹¹ Thus, the individual is an entity which remains external to the society that simulates it and only thus cultivates meaningful self-description and communication.¹² One is struck by a definition that seems fundamentally to transcend both the binary hetero-versus self-referentiality paradigm, and the pre-modern versus modern period dichotomy. Indeed, in studies informed by systems theory, both pre-modern and modern individuals are ultimately presented as entities that seek completeness. Thus, not surprisingly, any distinction between a medieval individual able to experience completeness as member of a group, and the modern individual's quest for completeness through unification with the state,¹³ vanishes. First, there is an implied functional parallel between the medieval group / *ordo* and the modern state, which would seem to suggest that medieval oneness, achieved by absorption into an 'other', had in effect entailed a process of alienation.¹⁴ Secondly, and as a corollary, systems theorists have observed that the medieval period offered a universal system of salvation which explicitly transcended social strata.¹⁵ This observation forces the conclusion that inclusion into a given social stratum may have contributed only a partial mode of indi-

⁹ BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns of inclusion and exclusion", p. 16.

¹⁰ N. LUHMANN, "The mind and communication", in: *Materialities of Communication*, pp. 371-387, at p. 385.

¹¹ LUHMANN, "The mind and communication", pp. 386-387.

¹² LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference*, p. 137.

¹³ See a discussion of these various experiences of individual completeness in BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns", pp. 13, 15-16, 18, 21-22.

¹⁴ This argument is developed in B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, "Ego, ordo, communitas: Seals and the medieval semiotics of personality (1200-1350)", in: *Die Bildlichkeit korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter: Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch*, ed. M. SPÄTH (Cologne, 2009), pp. 47-64; EAD., "L'individu, c'est l'autre: Signes d'identité et principes d'altérité au XII^e siècle", in: *L'Individu au Moyen Âge*, pp. 43-57, 311-316.

¹⁵ BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns", pp. 14-15.

viduation, which therefore had to be compensated by the universalism of religious salvation. Salvation in pre-modern times, nationalism in modern times: in either case, the experience of individuality is reified, as that of an excluded, partial being who seeks completeness by means of social inclusion. What this other binary construct, inclusion and exclusion,¹⁶ proposes, is a general process of individuation operating at multiple levels and equally in both the medieval and contemporary periods, while bypassing the rational Ego of modernity.¹⁷

It was in order to avoid the reductionism of essentialist thinking, based on ontological conceptions of the world, that Luhmann promoted a way of thinking based on difference.¹⁸ Luhmann's theory is centred on distinctions: between system and environment; communication and mind; message and information; society and the individual; master and slave; subjects and objects; the sign and signified; text and context.¹⁹ This binary mode of analysis, however, segues into and becomes the organising principle of society. Simply put, the argument of systems theory runs as follows. Systems are autopoietic, that is, they are closed, autonomous, self-contained and self-reproducing entities. Minds are systems that produce themselves by producing thoughts; societies are systems that produce themselves by producing communication. The content of communication is informed, not by individual thinking, but by previous communications which themselves result from the ongoing process of communication developed over time. Thus, communication cannot be attributed to individual human actors, who do not compose social systems but reside within their environment.²⁰ Since an individual mind's descriptive grasp of society

¹⁶ On Luhmann's introduction of the distinction between inclusion and exclusion within differentiation theory, see R. STICHWEH, "The present state of sociological systems theory", *Working Paper Series, Department of Sociology, University of Lucerne* (2005), pp. 1-13, http://www.lusosofia.net/textos/o_pensamento_de_niklas.pdf, at pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference*, p. 139, describes the Enlightenment as an evolutionary process that failed to develop its own self-reference using the semantic system of subjective reason.

¹⁸ WAGNER, "The end of Luhmann's social systems theory", p. 390. As critics have pointed out, having borrowed the theory of autopoietic systems from Chilean neuroscientists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, Luhmann remained enmeshed in its ontological structure; A. VISKOVAFF, "Foundations of Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 29 (1999), pp. 481-516, at p. 494.

¹⁹ Luhmann's principal exposition of his system theory is in N. LUHMANN, *Social Systems* (Stanford, 1995), trans. J. BEDNARZ JR. and D. BAECKER of, *Soziale Systeme: Grundrisse einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt, 1984).

²⁰ VISKOVAFF, "Foundations of Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems", pp. 487, 501-502.

cannot correspond to that society's systemic phenomenology, and since there is no position outside of society from which to communicate, societal observations are only possible as self-observations. Self-referential identification, however, raises paradoxical and tautological issues that point to its impossibility. Yet, societal self-reference is a vitally important communication process whereby society, as a closed autopoietic system, maintains and reproduces itself. The purpose of difference, therefore, is to restrict self-referential operations, by defining society by what it is not.²¹ One may say that difference is a semantic strategy of observation that replaces human interpretation. Difference processes information in the form of ideologies and of values that relate the social to the individual; but what difference does not do is define the difference between society and individual. Like self-reference, difference has its impossibilities. For difference makes sense only when positing an underlying identity that permits perceiving what is different. That very underlying identity, however, is both what renders self-referential operations impossible and makes difference necessary. So difference is a semantic expedient used by self-reference to block insight into the unity of the differences posited.²² Difference, in systems theory, is not dialectical and, unlike Derrida's *différance*,²³ it is predicated upon a pre-existing unity, the system, as the pre-condition for differentiation. In terms of this foundational postulate of identity, differentiation is directional, constituting the system as the point of departure of the differentiating operation and thus predetermining further linking operations.²⁴ For instance, in their discussions of the binary pair, society and the individual, systems theorists have privileged the society-side of the opposition, tending to consider the individual as the environment against which society and its network of communication operates. Given this asymmetry, which further compounds foundationalism by reifying one side of the polarity, it is not surprising that the individual, whether hetero-referential or self-referential, remains essentially an extra-social entity, an expedient concealing the fact that societal self-descriptions are

²¹ LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-reference*, pp. 129, 137.

²² LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-reference*, pp. 123-143.

²³ J. DERRIDA, "La différence", *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 62 (1968), pp. 73-101; translated as "Différance", in: *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. BASS (Chicago, 1982), pp. 1-28; and as "Difference", in: J. DERRIDA, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. D.B. ALLISON (Evanston, IL, 1973), pp. 129-160.

²⁴ WAGNER, "The end of Luhmann's social systems theory", pp. 394-395.

impossible without a distinction that identifies society in opposition to something else.²⁵

So, it seems that the analytical framework offered by the association of Ego with hetero- and self-reference is not without some pitfalls. It somewhat essentialises individuality. It also postulates a clear temporal distinction between the pre-modern and the modern which rests upon a cursory understanding of pre-modern cultures, relating them to modern cultures only in terms of opposition, and thus tending to ignore a wide range of variables which arise from analyses of both periodisation and the experiences of individuality.²⁶ Simplistic bi-periodisation also tends to support the teleological and evolutionary impulse that sees the individual as a progressive outcome. Is it not then desirable to re-visit the question of individuality apart from dualism, teleology, and evolution?

Systems Theory and the Historical Sciences

In asking such a question, I am in fact concerned about the heuristic value systems theory may hold for the historical sciences, or more specifically for medieval history. Luhmann's systems theory borrows from and emulates evolutionary theory.²⁷ It analogises societies and human beings to biological cells capable of reproducing themselves from moment to moment, "undergoing change as something that happens just when it happens". Since cells "do not need to look backward in order to move forward", systems theory "can do without historical reflection".²⁸ Luhmann sees history as an activity that "looks for new knowledge in the past", and thus as an approach that requires a combination of "narrative with causal explanations under the condition that it does justice to the accessible sources".²⁹ Causal explanations and narrative plotting, Luhmann argues, reduce complex and simultaneous phenomena to observer-

²⁵ *Supra*, n. 21.

²⁶ See a caveat in MARTIN, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*, pp. 16-17, where the author emphasises that Renaissance men and women were not detached from social groups and networks, from family and parish, from guild and confraternity; rather, such groupings were multiple, as they had been in the Middle Ages.

²⁷ STICHWEH, "The present state of sociological systems theory", pp. 6-8.

²⁸ G. WINTHROP-YOUNG, "On a species of origin: Luhmann's Darwin", *Configurations* 11 (2003), pp. 305-349, at p. 309; VISKOVA TOFF, "Foundations", p. 491.

²⁹ LUHMANN, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 1, p. 570, quoted in WINTHROP-YOUNG, "On a species of origin", p. 309.

dependent accounts of 'A' causing 'B', when these phenomena are in fact driven by the system's autopoietic process of self-production and self-organisation.³⁰ Narrative and causal explanations therefore ought to be avoided, and replaced with a theoretical scheme abstract enough to describe phenomena in terms of the system in which they occur, and independently of the interpretive role played by individuals.³¹ Such a scheme involves the paradigms of self-reference and difference whereby, as we have seen, system-specific functional differentiation, such as the coupling medieval-modern, serves as a backdrop for modern society's conceptualisation of its operational models. Luhmann's paradigm of difference eschews causality in that modern society, as an operationally closed and self-producing system, reacts to the environmental Middle Ages only in terms of its own sustainability and without losing its systemic closure, and thus derives from this differential coupling only the ability to observe and to reproduce its own operations.³² The only change that may occur through the interactions between system and environment affects the system's autopoiesis, which can be 'perturbed' by events to the point of re-directing the system's attitude toward the environment. This latter, however, remains a function of the system, which continues to process it according to its autopoiesis, however transformed. It is not the way the environment impinges upon the system that is of import to systems theorists – for this belongs to observer-based experience and analysis – but the way the system processes the event and carries out its autopoiesis.³³ The event, the environment, individuals, by existing differentially from and incommunicado with the system did not cause the change; they triggered a systemic wire.³⁴ Replacing causality, with its real shortcomings as an explanatory device, with differentiation, means replacing a sequential account with a determinative account, one in which the modalities of the binary's environmental pole, for instance orality, are shaped by the operations of the systemic pole, in this instance, literacy. Thus, the determinative account of systems theory provide descriptions, yet no explanation, of a system's constituent elements and of their function within the system's process of self-reproduc-

³⁰ See *supra*, nn. 20-21.

³¹ LUHMANN, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 1, p. 570; WINTHROP-YOUNG, "On a species of origin", pp. 309-310 and 312-314, where Winthrop-Young comments upon the extent to which Luhman himself cannot fully eschew narratology and causal explanation.

³² N. LUHMANN, *Ecological Communication* (Chicago, 1989), p. 145; LUHMANN, "The mind and communication", pp. 382-383; VISKOVA TOFF, "Foundations", pp. 484-485.

³³ VISKOVA TOFF, "Foundations", p. 485.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

tion,³⁵ while rigorously excluding the individual both as an interpretive subject and as a historical agent of change.

My purpose in offering this much too simplified overview of Luhmann's attitudes toward the past and toward history is to highlight the very historicity of systems theory. Luhmann's positions have been described as the melding of biology with sociology, as incorporating the newest findings of biology, cybernetics, and information theory. Luhmann himself claimed that his rejection of the primacy of language and of the concept of intersubjectivity is "compatible with other insights from cognitive sciences", and "based on considerations that lead back to an evolutionary-theoretical model of evolution".³⁶ To me, these statements suggest several things. First, systems theory is mimetic of a very specific scientific model, and is thus contingent upon the resulting body of knowledge for its validation. Yet, despite this temporal contingency, the theory considers itself to be universal. Theory in general presents itself as universal by providing a language within which to create a reality, an abstraction that excludes other realities, and most particularly the historical moment in which the theory was itself conceived. That moment, however, leaves traces, which, in order to make sense, must be re-inscribed within the theoretical framework. It is precisely this process of re-inscription that gives the contingency of theory its particular historical import.

However, speaking as a historian, I must confess that when we apply conceptual frameworks such as structuralism, subaltern or feminist theory to past cultures, in the heuristic hope of accounting for the principles of their operations, we often behave as if these past cultures did not themselves theorise, as if their artifacts spoke only of actual religious, political, or economic processes. I was struck, in reading Luhmann's admirable *Social Systems*, by his statement that pre-modern societies could not provide adequate descriptions of their transition from feudalism to modern structures.³⁷ In fact, it was at that very juncture, in the seventeenth century, that lawyers coined the term feudalism, thus investing the Middle Ages with a system of organisation that medievalists

³⁵ In his last major work, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 1, p. 66, Luhmann conceded that the theory of autopoietic systems has meagre explanatory value: it cannot explain how the system is constituted; it does not explain the historical state from which the system's further autopoiesis proceeds; it does not account for the ways in which society took on specific forms of differentiation over time; see a discussion of the limited extent to which Luhmann revised his position in VISKOVATOFF, "Foundations", p. 510.

³⁶ LUHMANN, "The mind and communication", p. 381.

³⁷ LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, p. XLII.

have since denounced as an Ancien Regime fiction.³⁸ What Luhmann considers to be “inadequate description” is unclear, but the fact is that seventeenth-century lawyers were less describing a preceding society than building a theory, feudalism, with which to articulate their perception of the distinctive form of their own society. Perhaps what makes it difficult to identify past theories is precisely their tautological dimension, their rhetorical transparency to the circumstances of their production. As we have noted in the case of systems theory, the abstractions proposed as analytical tools are themselves concrete biological processes only recently discovered by modern science. These processes, far from being considered to be informing or metaphorical, are assumed to be the very organs of societal operations.³⁹ Theoretical discourses can be said to have a referential relationship of identity with the world in which they are formulated and have currency.⁴⁰ Theory, thus, is an institutionalised structure of knowledge that is part of reality and engages with it by abstracting models from, and for, the concrete and sensual experience of living. The place of theory in historical research, therefore, should primarily inspire the historian to understand, and to distinguish between, the agency of theory in the past and its heuristic value in the present. Unquestioned application of modern theory to the medieval centuries may not only result in anachronisms but obscure, to quote Luhmann “[the ways in which] a [medieval] observer constructed what he constructed in order to be able to connect further observations”.⁴¹

The Medieval Ego in Medieval Theoretical Contexts

The most fertile grounds for the medieval theorisation of the individual have been provided by the fields of philosophy and theology.

³⁸ E.A.R. BROWN, “The tyranny of a construct: Feudalism and historians of medieval Europe”, *American Historical Review* 79 (1974), pp. 1063-1088, reprinted in: *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. L.K. LITTLE and B.H. ROSENWEIN (Oxford, 1998), pp. 148-169; S. REYNOLDS, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994); for medieval historians who hold that fiefs (if not the term ‘feudalism’), lordship, and vassalage were organisational features of medieval society, see most recently Th. EVERGATES, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia, 2007).

³⁹ I owe the insight on the tautology of theory to SEIGEL, *The Idea of the Self*, p. 644.

⁴⁰ Theory, thus, is not boundless abstraction set against reality (GUMBRECHT, “A farewell to interpretation”, pp. 390-391).

⁴¹ This is a paraphrase of the formulation of LUHMANN, “The mind and communication”, p. 383.

In twelfth-century philosophy, and particularly in logic, thinkers such as Roscelin († c. 1125) and Peter Abelard († 1142) diversely promoted the much resisted notion that only individuals (e.g., Peter, Paul) had a natural and concrete existence, whereas generic concepts (man) were signifiers (*voces*) for mental representations with no empirical referents and therefore with little if any ability to describe concrete reality.⁴²

In anthropological theology, the doctrinal need to account both for Christ's dual nature and for the distinct individuality of each person of the Trinity within a single divine substance considerably complicated the question of individuality, compelling a sustained consideration of the relationship between individuality and person. In their reasoning, which incorporated a great deal of philosophical speculation, twelfth-century intellectuals relied upon earlier theories of personhood and individuality, most of which were anchored in the first definition of the word 'person' ever authored, by Boethius († 524): "a person is an individual substance of a rational nature".⁴³ Boethius' definition of person, replete with his knowledge of Aristotelian logic and physics, is characterised by an unwillingness to apply the word 'person' to a universal entity.⁴⁴ This position seeped into early medieval commentaries on Priscian's (fl. 500 CE) grammatical definition of nouns, from which Roscelin devised his linguistic theory, long known as nominalism, although modern scholarship has denounced the application of this term to Roscelin's position as anachronistic. Roscelin equated a noun (*nomen*) with a particular thing, positing that nouns were physical and individual objects, each with its own domain of appellation and each referring to an actual thing. As a corollary of this grammatical theory of individuality, Roscelin was able to consider that each human being existed

⁴² On this point, Roscelin and Abelard shared with Luhmann the notion that mental observer-based descriptions of social phenomena had no meaning as such. A whole issue of *Vivarium*, 30.1 (1992), is devoted to a critical review of the positions held by early twelfth-century thinkers on the questions of individuals and universals, and on the state of modern historiography on the subject.

⁴³ Boethius, *A Treatise against Eutyches and Nestorius*, in: *The Theological Tractates*, trans. H.F. STEWART and E.K. RAND (New York, 1926), where the full discussion of 'person' is found at part II, p. 83, and part III, p. 89; M.L. O'HARA, *The Logic of Human Personality: An Onto-Logical Account* (Atlantic Highlands, 1997), pp. 1, 3, 48-49. I know the formulation "*persona est rationalis naturae*..." from Boethius, *Liber de persona et duabus naturis*, c. 3, a contribution to the Christological debate that exercised the Church in the fifth century and came to a schismatic head at Chalcedon in 451. On early medieval (up to 1200) discussions of individuality, see J.J.E. GRACIA, *Introduction to the Problem of Individuation in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, DC, 1984).

⁴⁴ O'HARA, *The Logic of Human Personality*, p. 49.

individually, and would not conceive that, as a natural species, human beings formed one entity, manhood. The grammatical status of 'manhood' was that of a word (*vox*), a man-instituted bearer of meaning, signifying that which was shared by each individual human being, but not referring to the reality of a present individual entity.⁴⁵ Humanity has no separate existence, and does not exist as such in living experience. In his *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, Anselm of Bec († 1109) wrote specifically against Roscelin, whose thought he may have caricatured for the sake of polemic. Anselm faulted Roscelin for his inability to separate 'man' (species or nature) from human person (individual), and for subsuming the first into the second. It was this inability, asserted Anselm, that prompted Roscelin to conclude that Christ's humanity entailed the assumption of a different person and not, as had happened, of a different nature (species). In arguing that the Logos assumed human nature but not human personality, Anselm safeguarded the distinctiveness of each person of the Trinity, the integrity of Christ's divine personality, and thus the unity of God's substance. His argument, thus, though challenging Roscelin's radical individualism, nevertheless rests upon the fundamental recognition that individuation of the species produces an individual person with a distinct personality.⁴⁶ The individual person cannot be predicated apart from nature, but there is no person in nature. As with Boethius, the notion of individual person cannot apply to a universal entity.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ On Roscelin's doctrine and its reception: J. JOLIVET, "Trois variations médiévales sur l'individu", *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 97 (1992), pp. 111-155, at pp. 126-127 and *passim*; C.J. MEWS, "Anselm and Roscelin: Some new texts and their implications", 1, "The *De incarnatione verbi* and the *Disputatio inter Christianum et Gentilem*", *Archives d'histoire doctrinaire et littéraire du moyen âge* 58 (1991), pp. 55-98, and 2, "A vocalist essay on the Trinity and intellectual debate c. 1080-1120", *Archives d'histoire doctrinaire et littéraire du moyen âge* 65 (1998), pp. 39-90, both reprinted in ID., *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Farnham, 2002), vi and x; ID., "St Anselm, Roscelin and the see of Beauvais", in: *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury*, ed. D.E. LUSCOMBE and G.R. EVANS (Sheffield, 1996), pp. 106-119, reprinted in ID., *Reason and Belief*, viii; ID., "The Trinitarian doctrine of Roscelin of Compiègne and its influence: Twelfth-century nominalism and theology re-considered", in: *Hommage à Jean Jolivet*, ed. A. DE LIBERA *et al.* (Paris, 1997), pp. 347-364, reprinted in ID., *Belief and Reason*, ix. Abelard also opposed Roscelin's theory although he was influenced by it (F.C. WADE, "Abelard and individuality", in: *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter: Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung: Vorträge des 2. Internationalen Kongresses für mittelalterliche Philosophie, Köln, 31. August-6. September 1961*, ed. W. PAUL (Berlin, 1963), pp. 165-171.

⁴⁶ JOLIVET, "Trois variations médiévales", pp. 123-124.

⁴⁷ This position originates with Boethius; Cicero's many uses of the term *persona* had included reference to a collectivity, O'HARA, *The Logic of Human Personality*, p. 44.

*Denique qui non potest intelligere aliquid esse hominem, nisi individuum; nullatenus intelligit hominem, nisi humanam personam. Omnis enim individuus homo, persona est. Quomodo iste intelliget hominem assumptum esse a Verbo, non personam, id est aliam naturam, non aliam personam esse assumptam.*⁴⁸

Finally, he who fails to understand that a man is something else than an individual will never understand that manhood is something else than a human person – for each individual man is a person. How can he understand that it is manhood and not personhood that was assumed by the Logos, that is, a different nature and not a different person.

Richard of Saint Victor († 1173) also broached the topic of individuality in connection with the three persons of the Trinity. In his treatise, *De Trinitate*, he recognised that there was no word to designate an individual substance and therefore decided to elaborate a definition:

*Ad designandum individualem aliquam substantialitatem, nomen in usu non habemus, sed ad maiorem dicendorum evidentiam ponere, et a proprio nomine trahere possumus. Dicatur itaque a Daniele Danielitas, sicut ab homine humanitas. Danielitas itaque intelligatur ipsa substantialitas, vel, si magis placet, illa substantia ex qua Daniel esse habet, illa substantia quae ipse est, et quam participare non potest aliqua alia humanitas. Itaque sicut corporalitas est communis multis, Danielitas vero omnino incommunicabilis: incommunicabilem vero idcirco dicimus, quia sic est ejus, ut non possit esse alterius. Nam qui hanc substantialitatem habuerit, profecto Daniel erit; qui vero non habuerit, idem Daniel esse non poterit.*⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Anselm of Bec, *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, ed. in: *PL* 158, col. 265 ff. The translation is mine, but is not semantically different from that in Anselm of Canterbury, *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, in: *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. J. HOPKINS and H. RICHARDSON (Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 269-270.

⁴⁹ Richard of Saint-Victor, *De Trinitate libri sex*, ed. in: *PL* 196, cols. 887C-992B., lib. 2, c. 12, at col. 908A; lib. 4, c. 4, at col. 933 A-B, and O'HARA, *The Logic of Human Personality*, at p. 55, one reads: "Nomen personae in ore omnium, etiam rusticorum, versatur, nomen vero subsistentiae nec ab omnibus saltem litteratis agnoscitur. ... Quoniam ergo intentionis meae est in hoc opere simplicioribus deservire, ... studebo ... non tam subsistentiae quam personae significationem determinare" ("The word 'person' is used by everyone, even people without learning; the word subsistence, on the other hand, is not even known to all the educated ... Since it is my desire to be of service to the unlearned in this work, ... I will strive to determine the meaning of person rather than of subsistence"). For a recent translation of this passage, see Richard of Saint Victor, *On the Trinity*, ed., trans., and commentary R. ANGELICI (Cambridge, 2012), p. 144.

We do not have a word to designate an individual substantiality, but for the sake of clarity, we can create a term derived from a proper name. Let us say then ‘danielity’ from the name Daniel, as we derive humanity from man.⁵⁰ Thus ‘danielity’ must be understood as that substantiality itself, or, if you prefer that subsistence which makes Daniel that substance which he is and in which no one else can participate. Hence, while humanity, like bodiliness, is common to a great number of beings, ‘danielity’ is absolutely incommunicable, in this sense that it belongs to him in such a way as to being incapable of belonging to another.

To paraphrase Richard, individuality, ‘Danielity’, is a radically singular, essential, and incommunicable difference. Humanity and bodiliness can be communicated to and shared among individuals, but: “as for incommunicable existence, it is that which can belong to but one sole person”.⁵¹ The incommunicability of the individual appears to be reminiscent of Luhmann’s theory, whereby a system, as a self-reproducing entity close to and incommunicado with its environment, could be said to be individual. The medieval notion of incommunicability, however, refers to the inalienability of personhood, to the fact that the being, the selfhood, of an individual is an essential property that cannot be given to or taken from him.⁵²

Thomas Aquinas († 1275) referred to Richard’s disquisition when elaborating his own ideas on personal individuality. Unlike Richard, Thomas derived his thoughts with the help of fully accessible Aristotelian texts, and thus with a different set of intellectual tools. The disparities between his and Richard’s concept of human individuality are significant but not so radical that they substantially transform the basic definition. Thomas wrote in his *Summa*: “Used of human nature, ‘person’ refers to this specific flesh, these specific bones, and this specific soul, which are the sources of man’s individuality; these are indeed part of what is meant to be a human person”.⁵³ Thus, whereas Richard had

⁵⁰ Or perhaps ‘human being’: *homo* has pretty much the same meaning as *Mensch*, the specifically male person being *vir*.

⁵¹ “*Existencia vero incommunicabilis est, quae non nisi alicui personae convenire potest*” (*De Trinitate*, lib. 4, c. 16, col. 940 B); trans. *On the Trinity*, p. 101. On the importance of Richard’s argument in favour of the existence of individuality as a substantial property, see N. DEN BOK, “Richard de Saint-Victor et la quête de l’individualité essentielle”, in: *L’Individu au Moyen Âge*, 123-143, 327-332, and ID., *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of Saint-Victor († 1173)* (Turnhout, 1996).

⁵² O’HARA, *The Logic of Human Personality*, p. 55.

⁵³ Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P.M. edita*, 4, *Pars prima Summae Theologiae a quaestione I ad quaestionem XLIX ad codices manuscriptos Vaticanos exacta cum Commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani, Ordinis Praedicatorum, S.R.E. cardinalis*

not included bodily features among the components of individuality, Thomas did, thereby conceiving the individual human being as a composite entity.

In yet another framework for the debate on individuality, sacramental theology, the focus shifts from the nature of individuality to its agency in the world. Thus, during the ceremony of baptism, the priest uses the formula: "*Ego te baptizo*" (Latin uses the Greek word), "I baptise you".⁵⁴ In this sentence the enunciating 'I', the priest, is the instrument of baptism, but it is the triune God who is the cause of the action. What is the meaning of *Ego* in such circumstances? The medieval answer begins with yet another, interesting, question: why does the formula need *ego* at all when, as the grammarian Priscian explained, in Latin a first-person verb does not need a pronoun, since the verb-form implies its subject. In Latin, one does not need to say: 'I am'. 'Am', that is, *sum* in Latin, is enough. So why deploy the term *ego*, if *ego* does not have a syntactic function? The gist of the answer is that *ego* manifests a specific and personal intention, as in *ego lego*, 'I read (and not you)'. The pronoun is emphatic, as in Italian, for instance, where in non-emphatic utterances the pronoun is not used. *Ego* also manifests identification of the priest with Christ, from whom the priest draws his legitimacy as an agent. It is as *ego* that the agent can be publicly empowered to execute the action he performs and to assume the responsibility of this action. *Ego* signifies that an action, to be operative, must proceed from the individuated intentional agent of the act. Such emphasis was made necessary by the understanding that, in the case of baptism, the priest was not the total cause of the effect of the sacrament. God was.

Whatever their differences, twelfth- and thirteenth-century theories assumed the individuality of human beings, that Socrates or Daniel were absolute individuals and as such the loci of effective agency in their societies.⁵⁵ Certainly, in construing these theories, philosophers and theologians were sensitive to ontological debates about the persons of the Trinity and the humanity of the incarnate God, and to semiotic questions about sacramental causality. It is even fair to say that theories of individuality and personhood primarily attracted attention in so far as they were linked to God.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it would

(Rome, 1888), I. Q. 29a. 4 co.

⁵⁴ The following discussion of *Ego* in the baptismal formula owes much to I. ROSIER-CATACH, *La parole efficace: Signe, rituel, sacré* (Paris, 2004), pp. 191-197.

⁵⁵ J.J.E. GRACIA, *Individuation in Scholasticism; The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, 1150-1650* (Albany, NY, 1994), pp. 2, 4.

⁵⁶ GUREVICH, *The Origins of European Individualism*, pp. 96-97.

be inappropriate to assume a clear distinction between theology and other fields of thought and knowledge. First, the theologians' discursive strategies deployed examples and metaphors that were inspired by living experience,⁵⁷ while they themselves were operating with conceptual tools that originated from disciplines with roots in classical epistemology such as logic, grammar, and rhetoric. Then, the distinctions that our modern disciplinary categories have created separating theology from literature, law, history, and diplomatics introduce divisions that were not operative in medieval culture. Non-theological texts of the 1200s were usually (though not invariably) redacted by clerics trained in the schools and later at university. Their treatment of past or fictional events, transactions, contracts, and litigations built upon those same sources, lexicons, and methods that not only informed theological reflection but were also stamped by the hermeneutics of Christian intellectual tradition. For instance, the syntactic redundancy of *ego* we have just encountered in sacramental theology is also present in such Latin texts as historiographical narratives, legal discourse, letters, charters and notarial documents,⁵⁸ a point to which I shall return.

Rhetoric, semantics, and grammar loom large in the *artes dictaminis* (or *dictamina*), those formularies which expounded the rules of letter-writing. The goal was less the production of private correspondence than the creation of elegant compositions meant for quasi-public circulation.⁵⁹ The *dictatores* themselves were not above displaying their own rhetorical skills in setting out the rules, moving beyond the normative toward the philosophical implications of the epistolary genre. Konrad of Mure (1210-1281), for example, a canon and

⁵⁷ E.g., theologians resorted to the metaphor of the seal to explain that Christ was a consubstantial image of God, or to account for the substantial unity of the three divine persons, (B. BEDOS-REZAK, "Medieval identity: A sign and a concept", *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), pp. 1489-1533, at pp. 1522-1526; EAD., "Replica: Images of identity and the identity of images", in: *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Medieval West*, ed. J. HAMBURGER and A.-M. BOUCHÉ (Princeton, 2006), pp. 46-64, at pp. 51-53; EAD., *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 186-191.

⁵⁸ On the presence and significance of *ego* in the diplomatic discourse of charters, see BEDOS-REZAK, "Medieval identity", pp. 1507-1510; EAD., *When Ego was Imago*, pp. 132-139.

⁵⁹ M. CAMARGO, *Ars Dictaminis, Ars Dictandi* (Turnhout, 1991: *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental* 60); G. CONSTABLE, "The structure of medieval society according to the *dictatores* of the twelfth century", in: *Law, Church, and Society: Essays in Honor of Stephan Kuttner*, ed. K. PENNINGTON and R. SOMMERVILLE (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 253-267; an updated catalogue of dictaminal texts prior to 1200 is provided in F.-J. WORSTBROCK, M. KLAES, and J. LÜTTEN, *Repertorium der Artes dictandi des Mittelalters*, 1, *Von den Anfängen bis um 1200* (Munich, 1992).

a cantor at the cathedral of Zurich, where he also served as head of the cathedral school (until 1271), is the author of a *Summa de arte prosandi* (c. 1275) devoted to the composition of letters and documents. The *Summa* opens with definitions, including a listing of the eight stages involved in the epistolary process, which Konrad summarised as: *quis, cuius, quid, quo, quomodo, cur, ubi, quando?* – who, whose, what, how, why, where, when?⁶⁰ A similar list is attributed by pseudo-Augustine in *De rhetorica* to Hermagoras of Temnos and by Aquinas to Cicero. Konrad proceeded to review and characterise each of the eight steps, beginning with *quis*: “*Quid intelligitur per ‘quis’?*” (“what is to be understood by *quis*?”) asked Konrad. He answered that *quis* refers to the person who sent the letter: “*Per ‘quis’ intelligitur persona literas mittens*”. His introduction of the term *persona* immediately drove him to address its semantic range; in theology, *persona* signifies (*significet*) the persons of the Trinity; in law (*apud iuristas*), someone who can stand trial; in society, someone invested with an office or a dignity; in grammar, *persona* indicates the nature of the relationship between pronoun and verb (*ego*: first person, *tu*: second person, *ille*: third person). Then, Konrad continued, a ‘person’ is an actor, someone who impersonates someone else. Finally, Konrad concludes his definitions of *persona* by asserting the individuality of the person.

“*Persona*” etiam quandoque dicitur individua cujuslibet rei essentia quasi per se una. Et secundum hoc quilibet homo et quodlibet individuum dici potest “*persona*”. ...Unde cum in hac significatione, in quantum accipitur pro homine, diversissime sint persone, congrue fit hic mentio de persona mittentis, scilicet cujus sit nominis, dignitatis, ordinis, professionis, administrationis, officii, etatis, conditionis. Tandem⁶¹ Judei, Tartari, Sarraceni, Barbari, alique infideles quandoque mittunt literas Christianis, et e converso christiani eisdem.⁶²

One can also say of a “person” that it is an individual, in that his real essence is in itself one and the same. And therefore a man as an indivisible unit can be said to be

⁶⁰ Konrad von Mure, *Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. in: *Briefsteller und Formelbücher des elften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. L. ROCKINGER, 2 vols. (Munich, 1863-1864; repr. in 1 vol. New York, 1961), vol. 1, p. 421; each of these pronouns, as Konrad explains, stands for: “who sends [a letter]; whose business does the letter’s sender treat, his or someone’s else; to whom does he send; what does he send; by whom or whither does he send; how does he send; why does he send; where does he send; when does he send”. A more recent edition of Konrad’s *Summa* is available: Konrad von Mure, *Die Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. W. KRONBICHLER (Zurich, 1968).

⁶¹ *Tandem* usually means ‘finally’.

⁶² Konrad von Mure, *Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. Rockinger, 1, p. 424.

a person. ... Since according to this meaning, in so far as it applies to man, persons are extremely diverse, it is appropriate to define the person of the sender, that is, mention his name, dignity, order, profession, administration, office, age, condition. Similarly Jews, Tartars, Saracens, Barbarians, and other infidels, when they send letters to Christians, and vice-versa.

Konrad's *Summa* is sensitive to linguistics, both at the semantic and at the grammatical level; it is permeated by the logic and lexicon of Christian hermeneutics (note the use of terms also found in theology such as *individuum*, *persona*, *essentia*). Nevertheless, it was his focus on *quis*, the agent responsible for the act (*actio*) of sending the letter, which uniquely brought about the definition of individuality. It is as an individual that a person can act. *Quis*, like *ego*, is a locus of performance, by virtue of its being a locus of individuality, responsibility, and accountability. The very mention of individuality, however, drew attention to the extreme diversity of the persons who constituted humankind, and thus to the necessity of more specific personal identification by such means as name, function, rank, ethnicity, religion, etc. From his recognition of the individuality of the person, Konrad moved seamlessly to modes of individual recognition, which consisted in the allocation of individuals to social categories. It was not the individual who was identified but the category to which he, or she, belonged. Konrad did not theorise the relationship between individuality and categorisation. He admitted that individuality is a source of diversity, but remained silent about the fact that his technique of individuation in the face of social diversity introduces a distinction between person and individual, whereby the person is an instance of the social order, while the individual has apparently become transparent to the inscription of a collective identity.⁶³

With Konrad of Mure, we would seem to have returned to the traditional view of the Middle Ages as a culture of corporate being, where to be is to be alike, similar to members of one's *ordo* and imitative of the divine model. This would be a premature conclusion, for the process outlined by Konrad, that of personal identification, did not exhaust the range of medieval individual self-perception. In fact, an official rank or status could offer an individual the opportunity of contemplating his self in the act of accomplishing official duties. Thus the jurist Philippe de Beaumanoir (1250-1296), who served as a bailiff for Robert of France, count of Clermont, completed in 1283 a body of custom-

⁶³ B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, "Du sujet à l'objet: La formulation identitaire et ses enjeux culturels", in: *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*, ed. P. VON MOOS (Cologne, 2004: *Norm und Struktur* 23), pp. 63-82, at pp. 74-75.

ary laws, the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, in which he outlined the duties of a judge:

Ci commence li premiers chapitres qui parole de l'office as baillis ...

*L'uitisme vertus qui doit estre en celi qui s'entremet de baillie maintenir, si est qu'il soit tres bien connoissans. Premièrement il doit connoistre le bien du mal ... S'il connoist soi meisme, il savra quel il est; et s'il set aucun mauvēs vice, plus tost l'en porra oster, et trop male chose est quant cil qui par son essample doit metre les autres en bonne voie demeure mauvēs en soi ...*⁶⁴

Here begins the first chapter which speaks of the duties of the *bailli* [judge]...

The eighth virtue which a person who undertakes to perform the duties of a *bailli* must have is to be very knowledgeable. First he must know good from evil, right from wrong ... and especially he must know himself ... If he knows himself, he will know what he is like; and if he detects in himself some evil vice, he will be able to get rid of it more easily, and it is a terrible thing when a person who should put others on the right road by his example remains evil himself..⁶⁵

Although Beaumanoir promotes the notion of personal exemplarity, he also encourages a form of self-knowledge and self-awareness that does not quite coincide with the numerous monastic and scholastic commentaries on the Delphic principle: "Know Thyself". These latter, during the twelfth and thirteenth century, recommended in one way or another that introspection lead to the image of God within the self,⁶⁶ thus positing a self as other than itself in two ways: by being the image of another, God, even as one also bore an image of sameness to others, who were also made in the image of God. Pierre de Celles († 1183), consequently, suggested in a sermon that the best way to know oneself was to observe others.⁶⁷

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*Fili hominis, in alienis cognosce te ipsum.*⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Philippe de Beaumanoir, *Coutumes De Beauvaisis*, ed. A. SALMON, 2 vols. (Paris, 1899-1900), 1, p. 16, 22-23.

⁶⁵ Philippe de Beaumanoir, *The Coutumes of Beauvaisis of Philippe de Beaumanoir*, trans. F.R.P. AKEHURST (Philadelphia, 1992), p. 19; P. Haidu, *The Subject Medieval / Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages* (Stanford, 2004), p. 298.

⁶⁶ P. COURCELLE, *Connais-toi toi-même: De Socrate à saint Bernard*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1974-1975), 1, pp. 228, 271, 278, 290-291.

⁶⁷ COURCELLE, *Connais-toi toi-même*, 1, p. 278.

⁶⁸ *Petri Cellensis Abbatis deinde s. Remigii Remensis ac demum Episcopi carnotensis*

Son of man, know yourself in others.

In the theoretical and prescriptive discourses of the central Middle Ages the individual is a powerful if protean category. It organises the speaking I / Ego around the control of its actions, and claims for the individual ontological distinction and uniqueness. The first categorisation is urged in order to buttress human-instrumental agency (distinguished from divine-efficient causality); the second leads to a discovery of the complexity of humanity rather than of individuality.⁶⁹ Patterns for the theoretical configuration of individuality tended to triune formulations (body, humanity, individuality; or person, individual, God) rather than to binary associations, and considered similarity (self – other) as well as difference (individual – manhood). The more difficult task before us now is the exploitation of what I term the ‘transparency’ of these theories, so as to approach the experience of individuality in human affairs that were contemporaneous with such theories. In turning to the realm of practice, we extend the medieval valence of individuality from being the essence of people and an idea about them, to its performance as an organiser, a fulcrum, for the expression and agency of Ego-based actions.

Concrete Operations and Individual Reference

In addition to thoughts and words there were objects to convey people’s self-perceptions and their willingness to act. Among such objects were seals, engraved metallic matrices and the wax impressions repeatedly issued from them. Seals bear the names and titles of their owners as well as an anthropomorphic image recording physically and emblematically their social status and their position within their lineages. Though utilised exclusively by kings and popes in the early Middle Ages, seals spread throughout society from the eleventh century onward, particularly in northern Europe, where they functioned as devices authorising transactions recorded in writing.⁷⁰ Though described with good reason as signs of personal identity, twelfth-century seals, which dis-

Sermones, ed. in: *PL* 202, cols. 657A-926D, at, col. 891D, *Sermo* 83.

⁶⁹ GUREVICH, *The Origins*, pp. 5-8.

⁷⁰ BEDOS-REZAK, *Form as Order*; M.T. CLANCHY, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066-1307*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 2013); P.D.A. HARVEY and A. MCGUINNESS, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (Toronto, 1996); A. STIELDORF, *Siegelkunde* (Hannover, 2004: *Hahnsche Historische Hilfswissenschaften* 2).

played an iconography evoking generic social status, are more likely to impress modern viewers as an apparatus of categorisation rather than of individuation.⁷¹ Yet, there is ample evidence that seal owners considered their seals to present their own images, to be their *imago*.⁷² The formula used in a charter given by Henry, future count of Champagne (1152-1181), in support of a gift of land to the Templars, is representative of those statements whereby sealers affirmed that they were signing with an imprint of their image:

*Et ut donum istum ratum et inconcussum maneret, impressione mee ymaginis signare curavi.*⁷³

In order that this gift remains ratified and unchanged, I [Henry, son of Thibault, Count of Champagne] took care to sign it with an imprint of my image.

The question thus becomes: how were medieval seals, which appear quite similar to each other in their display of functional types – a figure in episcopal vestment for a bishop, an equestrian in arms for a potentate – conceived as signalling individual identity in their own time? Since the impressed images themselves both involve replication and project the appearance of stereotyped resemblance, we should start with the physical aspects of the seal.

The physical property of seals most noted at the time of their diffusion was their nature as imprints. The vocabulary of charters in fact distinguishes between two types of imprint, that left by the image proper as produced by the die, and that left by fingers on the wax-seal: actual fingerprints. Some of these were casually made during the routine procedure of pressing the wax into the seal matrix before the latter was pulled away. Distinguishable from such incidental fingerprints are those carefully made by a finger thrust deeply and deliberately into the wax, leaving a small cavity within the reverse side of the main imprint which it served as a counter-seal.⁷⁴ Of course, this manoeuvre could not

⁷¹ B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, "From ego to imago: Mediation and agency in medieval France", *The Haskins Society Journal* 14 (2003), pp. 151-173. BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego was Imago*, pp. 152-159.

⁷² BEDOS-REZAK, "From ego to imago".

⁷³ *Recueil des actes d'Henri le Libéral, comte de Champagne (1152-1181)*, ed. J. BENTON and M. BUR, 2 vols. (Paris, 2009-2013), 1, No. 12, p. 16 (before 1152).

⁷⁴ See references and additional bibliography in BEDOS-REZAK, "Replica", and B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, "In search of a semiotic paradigm: The matter of sealing in medieval thought and praxis (1050-1400)", in: *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, ed. J. CHERRY and J. ROBINSON (London, 2008; *British Museum: Occasional Paper Series*), pp. 1-7.

confirm the identity of the individual who was sealing, since no system then existed to match fingerprints to their owners. Of interest here, however, is the fact that imprinting involved a direct contact between the seal owner and his sign.

Expressed through this contact, individual identity was conceived and actualised by reference to bodily and sensorial spatiality. In their materiality, seals organised representation around a logic of the body.⁷⁵ The incorporation of finger prints and other bodily parts (hair, tooth marks) in seals provided an impression of self-reference that was predicated upon individual presence. The performance of the seal as a mark of immediate presence occurred in a context of mediation, by the written charter to which the seal was attached. The charter itself involved a double deferral of meaning, for it was not written by the author of the action recorded in the text, and it continued to subsist even in the absence of this author. The presence of the seal fostered the impression of a self-presence of thought, action, and meaning,⁷⁶ materially underpinning the notion of an immediate textual *ego*. The pronoun *ego*, ubiquitous in diplomatic discourse, introduces an agent who is instrumental in activating the business transacted but is not the author of the written charter. Whereas, in the baptismal formula discussed earlier, God was held to legitimise the priestly instrumentality of *ego*, in charters, his seal-image authorised *ego* who was an actor but not an author.⁷⁷ Seals, thus, acted as social devices for protection against the hazards of mediate communication,⁷⁸ and seals accomplished this task by means of an incarnational mode of signification that incorporated an individual within the medium.

Representation as presence, however, combined the tactile and the visual. As already mentioned, the visual, the seal image, was stereotypic. Thus, whereas contact was individual, the images of individuals had an absoluteness of value, eschewing a (dis)play of individual contingency. In the presence of individuals, sense perception, not reason, enabled the recognition of their individuality. Thus, in a culture of presence, individuality was a given, a cornerstone of the system. Individuality, however, is not an adequate marker because it does not survive de-contextualisation nor does it permit abstraction. Therefore, where the goal was the circulation of media, individuality could not as-

⁷⁵ K.L. PFEIFFER, "The materiality of communication", in: *Materialities of Communication*, pp. 1-12, at p. 12.

⁷⁶ GUMBRECHT, "A farewell to interpretation", p. 391.

⁷⁷ See *supra*, n. 54, the discussion on the role of *ego* in the baptismal formula.

⁷⁸ LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference*, p. 103.

sure recognition. (This problem is not specific to the Middle Ages. In our own times, the evidence of photographs alone often fails to guarantee identification.) Yet, a sign should be recognisable, but the traces of the empirical individual characteristics that were inherent in the seal could not fully achieve such recognition. Individual characteristics were not excluded; they were simply not recognisable. By projecting an image of sameness repeated through the replicating process of imprinting, seals address the necessity of signs to be, at some level, general enough to be employed in multiple contexts.⁷⁹ The methodological caveat here is that seal stereotypy, the logic of sameness, indeed of de-individualisation that seems to have characterised its representational system, may have been principally an effect of the signifying process and therefore should not be seen as implying a lack of interest in individuality. I would argue that it was precisely because they operated in a world of continuing individual distinction required by a logic of personal and intentional presence, that seals and other personal images had to be conventional, that is, intelligible, so as to be able to mediate communication.⁸⁰

It may thus be helpful to think of seal images as imposing constraints upon, even as they also opened opportunities for their individual users. With respect to constraint, medieval individuals participated in a field of visual representation that was controlling. In his willingness to utilise a generic image of himself, the medieval individual displayed autonomy, by simultaneously assuming responsibility for and subjecting himself to the constraints of society and to the necessities of communication beyond his immediate presence. One might say that, in this sense, it was the individual who was the author of his own categorisation.⁸¹

With respect to opportunity, the combination of the tactile and the visual on seals achieved a specific effect, whereby the sign was produced as an extension of the individual person.⁸² This branding of one's personhood via an objectified extension of the self⁸³ meant that physical identity could produce a novel type of transactional personhood, which in turn enabled the distribution of that particular personality. In fact, an individual could and did, via the seal-

⁷⁹ SEIGEL, *The Idea of the Self*, p. 636.

⁸⁰ STICHWEH, "The present state of social systems theory", p. 4.

⁸¹ SEIGEL, *The Idea of the Self*, pp. 619, 625-626.

⁸² A. GELL, *Art and Agency: Towards a New Anthropological Theory* (Oxford, 1998), p. 104, discusses the ability objects have to extend and distribute human personality.

⁸³ On the relationship between branding and sealing in Mesopotamia see D. WENGROW, "Prehistories of commodity branding", *Current Anthropology* 49.1 (2008), pp. 7-34.

ing mechanism of imprinting, offer his personality as a sort of labelled commodity. Peter Damian, shortly after his elevation to the position of cardinal, c. 1057, sent a letter to the six other cardinal bishops exhorting them to be models of virtue to other bishops and to their flocks. He wrote in those terms:

*Quia igitur, dilectissimi, non modo sacerdotes, sed et sacerdotum vos decet esse magistros, necesse est ut vita vestra quaedam sit linea, et velut adamantis signaculum, quod vivendi caeteris adhibeat formam. ... Sic videlicet cum Petro claves Ecclesiae merito facti participes, obtinemus: dum nosmetipsos certam vivendi formam atque signaculum caeteris fidelibus exhibemus.*⁸⁴

My dear friends, since you should not only be bishops but the teachers of bishops, it is imperative that your life should be a design, as if it were a seal of steel that configures life for others. ... And so indeed, by deservedly becoming Peter's partners, we will receive the keys of the Church while ... being a seal to the rest of the faithful.

When Peter Damian urged his fellow cardinals to think of themselves as seal dies, he emphasised their design (*linea*), as if persons were commodities, objects whose worthy labels marked them as specific kinds of beings endowed with a special value and currency. Through this chain of markers and markings, the individual becomes an example, but an example *to* the generality, not *of* the generality.⁸⁵ Self-interested people, such as Beaumanoir's judge, exploited stereotypy to claim the role of model for others. It would seem that what we have in such cases is an awareness of one's value. This assertion of individual personality, with a claim to serve as a model, shows also an awareness of that individuality which is separate from those who should emulate that individual. In such instances, therefore, it was the combination of individuality and personality that produced a pattern worthy of emulation, one, however, that would circulate only to the extent that it affects the social behaviour, and not the individuality, of the parties concerned. To retain Peter Damian's seal metaphor, the seal's design will touch and mark and communicate itself, but the seal's substance will remain with the seal.

⁸⁴ *Petri Damiani Epistolarum Libri Octo*, ed. in: *PL* 144, cols. 205-497, *Epistola* 48, at col. 259 A-C, and *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. K. REINDEL (Munich, 1988: *MGH: Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit* 2), p. 61.

⁸⁵ My analysis of the evidence set out here thus challenges BOHN and HAHN, "Patterns", p. 12, who argue that the pre-modern individual considers himself an example of the general.

Conclusion

It appears that the main issues raised by individuality in the society of the central Middle Ages concerned its ontological status and the agency of individuals within a world which was developing mediate communication. In this latter context, the central importance of the individual as an agent inflected signification with a logic of presence, which privileged incorporation over distinctive representation. Apart from the requirements of communication, it may well be that the nature of the individual was obvious in the Middle Ages, and all that needed to be newly theorised in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the relationship of the part to the whole. In that particular relationship, objects came to play an increasing role and in the course of extending the boundaries of the individual produced and promoted a commodification of personality. If an individual could be a model, imprinting others with his personal behaviour, was then not the individual himself the principle of his own de-individualisation? Both seal usage and seal metaphor make clear not only (merely a suggestion) that individuality was the radical and necessary substrate of social action, but that it can obtain social currency only by donning recognisable features capable of engendering communication beyond the context of its immediate occurrence. Thus, the modalities of its participation in social action had a contradictory impact on medieval individuality: on the one hand, individuality retained its personal character as the basis of social accountability but remained un-signified; on the other, it achieved recognition as a unique distinctiveness and appeared to bypass and challenge the terms of the social template. Thus individuality could ultimately be experienced and denounced as a negative marker.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, “‘*Difformitas*’: Invective, individuality, and identity in twelfth-century France”, in: *Norm und Krise von Kommunikation: Inszenierungen literarischer und sozialer Interaktion im Mittelalter* ed. by A. HAHN, G. MELVILLE, and W. RÖCKE (Münster, 2006: *Geschichte: Forschung und Wissenschaft* 24), pp. 251-271.; BEDOS-REZAK, “Du sujet à l’objet”, pp. 76-77; EAD., “L’Individu, c’est l’autre”.

Hetero-Reference and Heterology: Autobiographical Writing, Individuality, and Gender on the Threshold of the Modern Period

EVA KORMANN

The human personality has its history: the self-conception of every individual forms itself and changes in the course of his / her life. Furthermore, the outlines people are able to produce of their own person also depend on the culture and age in which they live, and additionally they differ in their social position and their classification in the relevant historical gender order. That is to say, human self-conceptions change in the course of history. This history of human self-conceptions is the subject of historical anthropology and it may only be narrated in connection with social history. In volume 3 of his *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, Niklas Luhmann provides such a story when he discusses the alteration of personality concepts in terms of changing system differentiation.¹

The history of one personality is this person's autobiography, that is what a person mentions as his / her *vita* – and this 'autobiography' does not have to

¹ N. LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik: Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1980-1995), 3, pp. 149-258.

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Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 107-120.

be committed to writing and is still ‘written’ in the sense of being constructed, linguistically formed and marked by social discourses and apparatus – or semantics allocated by social systems.

The history of human self-conceptions can then be read – among other ways – from autobiographical history. But a reading of this sort of the autobiographical ought not to be ‘naive’ or ‘fall for’ this genre and its ostensible authenticity, because hardly any genre stages the ‘authentic’ as intensively as autobiography.²

So the following paper begins with two basic discussions about autobiographical writing in current literary studies. Referring to examples of German-language autobiography of the early modern era and the *Sattelzeit* (‘saddle period’)³ around 1800, I shall ask whether and how in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century written human self-conceptions changed. And if so, did they change for men and women in the same way? But the guiding question of the whole paper is that of the persuasiveness of Luhmann’s idea of the distinction between inclusion and exclusion individuality. In this sense, I think a look at coeval gender orders and a side glance at the twentieth century are indispensable. So I ask whether the change of autobiographical writing for men and women around 1800 could be explained in terms of inclusion and exclusion individuality and whether these antithetic concepts are able to describe human self-conceptions from the Middle Ages until today.

First, the basic discussions about the genre of autobiography: monographs, essays, and lectures on autobiography often start with Lejeune’s handy definition in *L’autobiographie en France* (1971):

*Définition: nous appelons ‘autobiographie’ le récit rétrospectif en prose que quelqu’un fait de sa propre existence, quand il met l’accent principal sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l’histoire de sa personnalité.*⁴

Definition: we call ‘autobiography’ the retrospective prose narrative of a person about his / her own life when he / she places the principal accent on his / her own existence, particularly the history of his / her personality.

² Cf. E. KORMANN, “Gespiegelte Norm – gespeicherte Erfahrung: Autobiographik, Autonomie und Genuss an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit”, in: *Inszenierte Erfahrung: Gender und Genre in Tagebuch, Autobiographie, Essay*, ed. R. HOF and S. ROHR (Tübingen, 2008), pp. 97–110.

³ Cf. R. KOSELLECK, “Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert als Beginn der Neuzeit”, in: *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewusstsein*, ed. R. HERZOG and R. KOSELLECK (Munich, 1987), pp. 269–282.

⁴ Ph. LEJEUNE, *L’Autobiographie en France* (Paris, 1971), p. 14.

With this genre concept Lejeune defines a narrow outline of the autobiographical, in the centre of which are Rousseau's *Confessions* (posthumous 1782/1789). This view of genre has been and still is well thought of also in the German-language debate, because this concept ultimately fits if the focus of interest is not occupied by Rousseau but by Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Truth and Fiction*, 1811-1833): Rousseau, Goethe, and other writers at around 1800 tell the story of the formation of their personalities as the history of an independent subject and demarcate their character and work, in the case of Rousseau in uncompromising determination from all others or, in the case of Goethe, they become self-creators, the authors of their lives.⁵ The prototypes of such a genre definition are thus wonderful Petri dishes for the self-referential individual of the Modern. I have deliberately chosen the metaphor of the Petri dish (used for the cultivation of cells in biology) rather than that of reflection. Rousseau and Goethe with their autobiographical self-conceptions became the social model case for socially desirable, prestige-laden ideas of the self and are thus not a mere reflection of self-modelling that was considered socially appropriate in its time but a cultivation of human self-definition which could be well explained, in Luhmannian words, as exclusion individuality told in semantics of individuality, subjectivity, and uniqueness.⁶

A second possibility of defining autobiographical writing, which corresponds to Lejeune's later position and research interests, opens up the terrain of autobiography and, by the way, also the field of human self-conceptions, so now there are to be found early modern autobiographical texts which show inclusion individuality or an hetero-referential 'I'. The term 'autobiography' is now often replaced by the broader concept of 'autobiographical writing'. Lejeune's 'autobiographical pact' supplemented by his *pacte de vérité* ('pact of truth') functions as a central genre criterion:

*Le pacte autobiographique est l'engagement que prend un auteur de raconter directement sa vie (ou une partie, ou un aspect de sa vie) dans un esprit de vérité. Il s'oppose au pacte de fiction.*⁷

⁵ H.R. JAUF, "Gottesprädikate als Identitätsvorgaben in der Augustinischen Tradition der Autobiographie", in: *Identität*, ed. O. MARQUARD and K. STIERLE, 2nd edn. (Munich, 1996), pp. 708-717.

⁶ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 160.

⁷ Ph. LEJEUNE, *Signes de vie: Le pacte autobiographique 2* (Paris, 2005), p. 31. Cf. "pacte de vérité" ("pact of truth") *ibid.*, p. 25.

The autobiographical pact is the commitment made by an author to directly narrate his / her life (or part or aspect of that life) in a spirit of truth. It is the opposite of the pact of fiction.

Whereas Lejeune in 1971 emphasised the retrospective history of one's own personality as a characteristic of the genre and thus exclusively regarded self-representations in closed form as real autobiographies, his later version of what constitutes the autobiographical permits varying written relationships of an author to his / her life: Lejeune then began to take into consideration the fact that not everything that is narrated within a *pacte de vérité* with regard to one's own life has to construct the most complete retrospective history of personality formation possible. Some autobiographers describe only certain temporal or topical excerpts of their life story, give space in their text to other objects besides self-representation or create differently collaged, fragmented and hybrid images: possibly writers have no licence to the open autobiographical – because of their social position, place in gender order, or because of contemporary ideas of their cultural circle. Or they cannot and do not want to narrate a retrospective, closed history of their personality formation, since they experience their own person as fragmented and therefore only a mishmash⁸ or “*kuderwelsche[s] Ding*”⁹ – that means something like “double Dutch” – might serve as a life story, as a self-portrait. Or they have no life story of their *own* detached from others because their person and history are integrated in the history of their environment, a network of other people, in connection with whom alone they are able to develop their self-image, thus coming close to Luhmann's term of inclusion individuality in early modern time. For the human self-awareness of the early modern I have suggested the concept of *heterologe Subjektivität* (‘heterologous subjectivity’), a self-perception that describes one's own person with reference to family, social groups and social contexts and does not – like the modern – contain it in forced solipsisms.¹⁰ I coined the

⁸ Sophie von La Roche, *Mein Schreibetisch: Erstes Bändchen* (1799), repr., 2 vols. (Karben, 1996), 1, “*Mischmasch*”, p. 212. Cf. G. LOSTER-SCHNEIDER, “... einen sehr genauen Grundriß von meinem Kopf und meinen Neigungen geben’: Autobiographische Selbstdarstellung und poetologische Selbstreflexion in Sophie von La Roches ‘Mein Schreibetisch’”, in: *Autobiographien von Frauen: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*, ed. M. HEUSER (Tübingen, 1996), pp. 214–232.

⁹ Ulrich Bräker, *Lebensgeschichte und natürliche Ebenteuer des Armen Mannes im Tockenburg* (1789), ed. W. GÜNTHER (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 194.

¹⁰ E. KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott: Autobiographik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2004: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 13).

term 'heterologous subjectivity' to clearly demarcate the heterology of early modern self-conceptions from the often used label 'heteronomy' in contrast to 'autonomy' with respect to autobiographies of that time: so even when people do not emphasise their uniqueness and difference to others but tell their life stories as being connected to a certain context, this in no way means that they are not aware of themselves and are totally bound to the law of others, which suggests the term 'heteronomy'. Heterology corresponds, I believe, to what the conference title designates as the hetero-reference of the self.

But variants of fragmented and hybrid self-conceptions will also appear as post-modern individuality, which clearly differs decidedly from a Rousseau-like exclusion individuality, even if they still can be considered a portraying exclusion individuality. Against this background, the autobiographies of Shoah survivors are difficult to interpret: they were radically excluded from the Nazi-German society and the society of other German dominated countries during World War II, their exclusion aimed at literal and radical extinction. Many Shoah survivors wrote autobiographical works, but none of them did it in the manner of Goethe or Rousseau. Luhmann's exclusion individuality means the social exclusion of the individual (as a whole person) but the person's multiple inclusions in social subsystems¹¹ which were not accessible to Jews in those days. So their whole person was excluded from social systems, except the inclusion in the system of the extermination camps. But their autobiographies could by no means also exhibit an inclusion autobiography similar to the early modern type. So I do not agree with Stichweh, who suggests that widely excluded individuals could develop an inclusion individuality.¹² Also others in the twentieth century with its dynamics, fissures, and ruptures were often forced to tell their lives in a new fashion because of changing experience of the inclusion and exclusion of different social groups and procedures, and therefore they were not able to exhibit stable individualities in terms of both inclusion and exclusion, at least in the forced cohesive and contained type of the male bourgeois around 1800. When Zygmunt Baumann says:

[P]ostmodern life strategies have in common that they tend to render human relations fragmentary ... and discontinuous; they are all up in arms against ... long

¹¹ For autobiographies of Shoah survivors cf. *Überleben schreiben: Zur Autobiographik der Shoah*, ed. M. GÜNTER (Würzburg, 2002). Cf. R. STICHWEH, "Inklusion / Exklusion, funktionale Differenzierung und die Theorie der Weltgesellschaft", [http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/soz/iw/pdf/stichweh_6.pdf](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/soz/iw/pdf/stichweh_6.pdf) (download 10.03.2010), p. 11, Fn. 11.

¹² STICHWEH, "Inklusion / Exklusion", *ibid.*

lasting consequences, and militate against the construction of lasting networks of mutual duties and obligations,¹³

he notes that lives in the twentieth century are involuntarily or deliberately discontinuous and without lifelong bonds, and so life stories have to be fragmented too.

Particularly if one considers the Goethe period the florescence of a self-reference of the self – from the point of view of autobiography theory this is necessary – and if one considers the self-concepts exhibited in the autobiographies of Rousseau and Goethe prototypes of exclusion individuality, i.e. if one therefore locates the height of self-reference of the self and thus of exclusion individuality at around 1800, one must debate what marks current ‘I’-forms which mostly no longer allow themselves to be contained in a somewhat closed, goal-oriented development narrative. For most people in twentieth-century western societies – and it is precisely for them that autobiographical history has ascertained the attempt to form oneself as a unified, closed free subject demarcated from others – the emphatic¹⁴ exclusion individuality is no longer possible. This would mean that exclusion individuality in semantics of the self-referential ‘I’ was only one short – ultimately useless for the individual – attempt at compensatory reconstruction that after 1900 was no longer attainable.¹⁵ The aporia of exclusion individuality appeared on stage shortly after its invention, ironically by one of the creators and idols of that kind of Promethean self-conception: Goethes *Faust I* and *II* could be seen – among other aspects – as the tragedy of modern individualism.¹⁶ Luhmann himself saw the self-referential ‘I’ as a blind alley which came to an end around 1900 at the latest.¹⁷ But as far as I can see he did not coin a special label for the (post-) modern hybrid individuality of those people who are widely excluded from functional social subsystems and have lost inclusion in social groups too.

The situation so far: the first basic debate in the framework of autobiographical theory is centred on the difference between a narrow genre definition

¹³ Z. BAUMAN, “From pilgrim to tourist – or a short history of identity”, in: *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. S. HALL and P. DU GAY (London, 1996), pp. 18-36, at p. 33.

¹⁴ H. PFOTENHAUER, *Literarische Anthropologie: Selbstbiographien und ihre Geschichte – am Leitfaden des Leibes* (Stuttgart, 1987).

¹⁵ Cf. J. OLNEY, *Memory & Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing* (Chicago, 1998).

¹⁶ Cf. M. JAEGER, *Global Player Faust oder Das Verschwinden der Gegenwart: Zur Aktualität Goethes*, 2nd edn. (Berlin, 2008).

¹⁷ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 215 ff.

of 'autobiography', which ultimately can only include texts generated around 1800 whose authors – socially licensed – are able to put themselves as autonomous subjects in the glare of publicity (and are forced and able to construct an exclusion individuality), and a broad concept of autobiographical writing which can contain the broader history of human self-conceptions from inclusion individuality to the exclusion type. But it remains questionable whether this history could be entirely told in terms of the simple dualism between exclusion and inclusion individuality.

In addition to this difference with regard to a broad and narrow autobiography concept the question of fictionality or referentiality of the genre is disputed in current autobiography theory. In the focus of autobiographical texts there is the 'experience' of those who write it. The 'experience' of a person is at the interface between discourse and material, text and *hors-texte* ('extra-text'): how people experience pain, sorrow, joy or pleasure is neither discursive construction alone nor exclusively dependent on material stimuli.¹⁸ By 'experience', constructing discourse and material impulse are indissolubly united. There is no experience before the discourse, but no discourse is able to completely extinguish manifest material impulses. The discourse, or here more simply and concretely the repertoire of prescribed terms, linguistic patterns, descriptive formulae and rhetorical gestures, all of these are always inscrutable. Even in the case of experiences of pain and their non-verbal, bodily and phonological expression, people necessarily seize on something that is already pre-formed.

Those who write their memories present a 'written self' and do not simply announce a 'described self'. Everything that people write ultimately presupposes a selection process, a world outlook by means of which the variety of environment signals is structured and a self-image that makes 'experience' and remembering possible at all. If a story is narrated, i.e. when what people 'experience' in a given place at a given time is described, it is always a construction – irrespective of whether the action, figures, space and time are fictitious or

¹⁸ K. VON GREYERZ, "Erfahrung und Konstruktion: Selbstrepräsentation in autobiographischen Texten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in: *Berichten, Erzählen, Beherrschen: Wahrnehmung und Repräsentation in der frühen Kolonialgeschichte Europas*, ed. S. BURGHARTZ et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), pp. 220-239; J. BRUNER, "The autobiographical process", in: *The Culture of Autobiography*, ed. R. FOLKENFLIK (Stanford, 1993), pp. 38-56; H.J. MARKOWITSCH and H. WELZER, *Das autobiographische Gedächtnis: Hirnorganische Grundlagen und biosoziale Entwicklung* (Stuttgart, 2005).

can be referred to extra-textual reality and irrespective of whether the text suggests a fictional or a referential non-fictional contract with readers.

Memory has already selected and is subject to a dynamic change process.¹⁹ Each formation of the memory, whether the individual autobiographical, the familial or the collective one, is ultimately an order of forgetting,²⁰ and experiences are constructive perceptions, interpretations, and couplings of stimuli.²¹ Furthermore life histories may – in a certain, historically changing, framework – contain fiction in order to narrate a life at all, to be able to describe the self. Michaela Holdenried has demonstrated that the licence to produce fiction in autobiographical writing has increased in the course of the modern and post-modern periods.²² This seems to be connected with a change of the model of self-conception: does narrating an exclusion individuality allow for more fictitious ingredients than inclusion individuality? Or is it the case that the more self-reference becomes the prototype of individuation, the more the life of an individual can be narrated only by means of fiction? Or does the transformation of the *pacte de vérité* enter the stage of autobiographical writing, when even the exclusion individuality starts to become difficult for people after 1900, so that identity needs fiction to be narrated? An extreme example of this in German-language literature may be the prose of Franz Kafka and its protagonists who all are “*Repräsentant[en] eines dissoziierten, zersplitternden Ichs*” (“representatives of a dissociated, shattered I”),²³ which Peter-René Alt describes as coded autobiography,²⁴ so that the author’s self is lost in codification. This kind of late or postmodern individuality seems to be so self-referential that there is no other reference outside the person’s imagination.

¹⁹ MARKOWITSCH and WELZER, *Das autobiographische Gedächtnis*, pp. 28 ff.

²⁰ Cf. the conference *Archive Vergessen: Räume des Verlusts* des Bielefelder Graduiertenkollegs “Archiv – Macht – Wissen”, Universität Bielefeld, 29 January 2009; cf. for different types of episodic memory a.o. E. KORMANN, “Bruchstücke großer und kleiner Konfessionen: Vom gelegentlichen Widerspruch zwischen individuellem, familiärem und kulturellem Gedächtnis: Grass, Timm und Wilkomirski”, in: *Gedächtnis und kultureller Wandel: Erinnerndes Schreiben – Perspektiven und Kontroversen*, ed. J. KLINGER and G. WOLF (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 53–65.

²¹ P.O. GÜTTLER, *Sozialpsychologie: Soziale Einstellungen, Vorurteile, Einstellungsänderungen*, 4th revised edn. (Munich and Vienna, 2003), p. 80; R.S. WYER, “The acquisitional uses of social knowledge: Basic postulates and representative research”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 6 (1980), pp. 558–573; MARKOWITSCH and WELZER, *Das autobiographische Gedächtnis*, pp. 28–31.

²² M. HOLDENRIED, *Im Spiegel ein anderer: Erfahrungskrise und Subjektdiskurs im modernen autobiographischen Roman* (Heidelberg, 1991).

²³ P.-A. ALT, *Franz Kafka: Der ewige Sohn: Eine Biographie* (Munich, 2005) p. 360.

²⁴ ALT, *Franz Kafka*, pp. 13 ff.

Autobiographies are thus also based, like other texts, on constructions. Accordingly, many literary critics conclude that autobiographies are necessarily fictional texts.²⁵ But to me this conclusion does not seem to be inevitable, because if every text was fictional, we would no longer require the concept of 'fiction', since there would no longer be any counter-concept of 'non-fiction'. So to be clear: I prefer Lejeune's concept of the *pacte de vérité*, which is even conscious of constructions and biases in autobiographical writing.

Now, to finally comment on autobiography production of the early modern period and the self-conception of the writer developed in this context. The texts discussed here from the topically relevant period are usually not *récits rétrospectifs* ('retrospective narratives') for the development of the writers' own personalities but mixed forms, e.g. reports of religious awakening, chronicles, and diaries containing passages in which the authors represent themselves, in which not only family knowledge or internal institutional matters are to be handed on to later generations but also the author's own personality might be expressed.²⁶ This happens in family histories, for example by one's own person being presented as a model for later generations, or when it comes to defending oneself against any claims the latter might make, such as in financial or moral matters.²⁷ Reports on revivalist experiences provide religious examples and describe one's own person and life as exemplary, gifted with the grace of God and successfully resisting sinful disputes. Thus, the pietist Johanna Eleonora Petersen, at the beginning of her *Life-Course*,²⁸ addresses the "dear reader" and justifies her claim to his / her attention, partly with the special grace of God and partly with slander of her contemporaries. Her husband legitimises the comprehensive account of his life by the claim that he had been asked to defend himself against attacks.²⁹ The seamstress Anna Vetter from Ansbach, in

²⁵ E.g. M. WAGNER-EGELHAAF, *Autobiographie* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2000).

²⁶ Cf. a.o. G. JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 2002: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 10) and KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*.

²⁷ Early modern familial and monastic chronicles are often justificatory book-keeping for the descendants: income and expenditure are recorded and losses justified towards the later generation (cf., a.o., KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, pp. 273 f. and 229).

²⁸ Johanna Eleonora Petersen, "Eine kurtze Erzählung / Wie mich die leitende Hand Gottes bißher geführt / und was sie bei meiner Seelen gethan hat", attachment to EAD., *Gespräche des Hertzens mit GOTT / Ander Theil* (Ploen, 1689).

²⁹ Johann Wilhelm Petersen, *Lebens-Beschreibung Johannis Wilhelmi Petersen; Der Heiligen Schrifft Doctoris, vormahls Professoris zu Rostock, nachgehends Predigers in Hanover an St. Egidii Kirche, darnach des Bischoffs in Lübeck Superintendentis und Hoff-Predigers endlich Superintendentis in Lüneburg*, 2nd edn. (s.l., 1719), p. 235.

an exemplary fashion, reduces such relevance production to a basic formula: “*Es möchte jemand fragen, wie ich so hoch von Gott geliebt bin worden, und was mein junger lebens=lauff gewesen*” (“Someone may ask how it is that I am so much loved by God and what my youthful life-course has been”).³⁰ So she seeks allowance for the quite unusual fact that she, being an almost illiterate³¹ woman, tells and writes down her life story and has it published.

Early modern autobiographies are relationship-oriented and not at all solipsistic. They are collections of ‘experience’ in the sense explained above, which were intended to be handed on to others, but mostly not to an anonymous broad public but to a well-defined group of sympathetic readers. This seems to be the consequence of hetero-reference: Thus, by their self-image the authors of such self-portraits make reference to a group of others and also claim reference to this group as their readers. They justify their writing, arguing that their experiences might help others and that they want their lives to serve as examples. This is not done by excessive self-obsession but with clearly marked hetero-reference.

This reference to a surrounding world is not concealed in texts of pietists or monastic and familial chronicles, but is in the foreground of the representation. Early modern autobiographists thus present a heterologous subjectivity and contour their own persons, their experiences, achievements, sorrows and joys, above all by writing about other things, about God and the world. The reference to ‘God and the world’ is a precise reference to the system of coordinates of early modern self-representations which are oriented to the surroundings (family or the community of the religious denomination or group) and the divine order and from this receive their guidelines and formal structures. It seems that this corresponds fairly precisely to the concept of this volume. What I call hetero-reference of individuality in essence emphasises two things: first, this form of individuality is unable to dispense with the attachment to God and the surrounding world; secondly, that it is still a matter of a self-conception and not a nebulous melting of the ‘I’ into the ‘we’, paraphrased by Jacob Burckhardt in – granted – immortally beautiful words:

Im Mittelalter lagen die beiden Seiten des Bewußtseins – nach der Welt hin und nach dem Innern des Menschen selbst – wie unter einem gemeinsamen Schleier träumend oder halbwach. Der Schleier war gewoben aus Glauben, Kindesbefan-

³⁰ Anna Vetter, “Von denen Gesichtern Annae Vetterin”, in: Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt, 1729), 3, pp. 267–294, at p. 281.

³¹ Cf. KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, p. 161.

*genheit und Wahn; durch ihn hindurchgesehen erschienen Welt und Geschichte wundersam gefärbt, der Mensch aber erkannte sich nur als Rasse, Volk, Partei, Korporation, Familie oder sonst in irgendeiner Form des Allgemeinen.*³²

In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness – the side turned to the world and that turned inward – lay, as it were, beneath a common veil, dreaming or half awake. The veil was woven of faith, childlike prejudices, and illusion; seen through it, world and history appeared in strange hues; man recognised himself only as a member of a race, a nation, a party, a corporation, a family, or in some other general category.

Even in the high period of the autonomy cults there is a residual awareness of heterology, the dependence of one's own person and identity on the reference to others. Sophie von La Roche wrote *Mein Schreibetisch* (*My Desk*, 1799), which is by no coincidence an extended letter. This late text of hers presents a portrait of her workplace and the books and writings gathered on and around it. Time and again, and this has nothing to do with undisciplined thinking, she slides into the description of her life story: La Roche's *Mein Schreibetisch* is an excellent example of what Lejeune calls "*lecture de soi*" ("reading of one-self").³³ One's own life and the self-written course of that life are modelled by means of readings. Other people's books might be experienced as doubles, models, figures of contrast or sources of inspiration for the lived and written life. The variety of the functions books and their reading histories taking over in La Roche's hybrid text creation *Mein Schreibetisch* is the subject of a paper by Loster-Schneider.³⁴ The selecting, quoting, assembling, excerpting, reformulating, translating and appropriating of other people's texts stabilises and destabilises the female self of a writer whose identity conflicts are due to "male discourse hegemony",³⁵ a discourse hegemony that is, however, as Loster-Schneider shows, constantly thwarted and subverted. It might also be said that the readings of La Roche are not only subordinately stabilising and destabilising but rather causal to her identity formation: the self emerges – also – from reading and it emerges in writing.³⁶

³² J. BURCKHARDT, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Berlin, 1928), p. 131. English trans.: http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/historian/Jacob_Burckhardt.html, accessed on 18.03.2010.

³³ LEJEUNE, *Signes de vie*, pp. 169 ff.

³⁴ LOSTER-SCHNEIDER, "Autobiographische Selbstdarstellung".

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

³⁶ Cf. S. GROPPE, *Das Ich am Ende des Schreibens* (Würzburg, 1990).

So, even in 1799, the middle of the transition period mostly regarded as the florescence of autobiography of an independent subject, La Roche hardly regards herself as an independent subject and, in her autobiographical writing, leaning so clearly on other people and things: La Roche is able to draft the “very precise outline of [her] head and inclinations”³⁷ only by alluding to what she has collected and read. That La Roche created for herself this outline from the montage of external texts does not distinguish her text in any practical way from that of male autobiographies of her time, which all borrow from social semantics. But male textual self-staging does not amount to a *lecture de soi* but rather to a forced statement of independence, of exclusion, and exclusivity. Because these texts set the – only apparently gender-neutral – standards for the genre, autobiographists like La Roche find themselves exposed to a paradoxically standardised situation: the genre of ‘autobiography’ demands an autonomous self-conception, but the contemporary gender order knows of no autonomous model for women.³⁸

La Roche’s type of self-representation, relying on and oriented towards others, is therefore strikingly similar to many autobiographical writings of women around 1800. The autonomous female subject cannot be found in this period.³⁹ These women wrote about others and did not, as Rousseau did, find the contours of their own personality in the conflict with their environment, but by making relationships, leaning on others and offering support to others. It is no coincidence that eighteenth-century women much more frequently than men chose the letter form to describe their lives.⁴⁰

That human self-conceptions change under the influence of the Enlightenment and other major sociocultural developments of the eighteenth century, and with changing social structures, shall not be a topic for discussion here. And it would also be a misunderstanding of the gender issue to insist on an essentially female relationship orientation. But human self-conceptions are always connected with gender orders. Autonomy as the summit and goal of human self-conceptions was intended only for (European) men at around 1800.

³⁷ La Roche, *Mein Schreibetisch*, p. 6.

³⁸ Cf. on the double bind of women autobiographers, a.o., S. SMITH, *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington, 1987).

³⁹ E. RAMM, “Warum existieren keine ‘klassischen’ Autobiographien von Frauen?”, in: *Geschriebenes Leben: Autobiographik von Frauen*, ed. M. HOLDENRIED (Berlin, 1995), pp. 130-141; EAD., *Autobiographische Schriften deutschsprachiger Autorinnen um 1800* (Hildesheim, 1998); O. NIETHAMMER, *Autobiographien von Frauen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen and Basel, 2000).

⁴⁰ NIETHAMMER, *Autobiographien von Frauen*, p. 93.

It is a telling expression of the clear-sightedness of Sophie von La Roche that she did not subject the representation of her life to an autonomy dictate that was impossible for her as a woman but cleverly created a heterologous self-conception related to other people and things, in which she found space for her own life story in the midst of a montage of texts by other authors. This difference in autobiography writing around 1800 between autonomy-seeking (while necessarily not finding it) texts of men and relationship-oriented texts of women cannot be found before the epoch's threshold: if autonomy has not yet become the – masculine – norm, only relationships to others, also for male authors, give a licence to attract public attention. And when the sociocultural patterns change, the ability and wish to stage one's own life in retrospect as a linear development towards an autonomous personality disappears even with male authors in the course of history.⁴¹ Thus, no gender-dependent, time-overlapping systematic difference in the genre can be established – which was not to be expected, since gender differences are differences in historically changeable gender orders. The use of genre changes with them. This diagnosis can be related to Luhmann's theory of the type of social systems being connected with the type of individuality, but only if one admits that even when men started to be included in several functionally differentiated subsystems, the coeval gender order excluded women from most of them. At that time they still remained part of their families and groups, even when these inclusions had lost significance for self-perception and the interpersonal perception of human beings in a given society. So autobiographies of women at around 1800 showed a 'mishmash' between inclusion individuality and the patchwork individuality of the excluded unstable nomadic (post-)modern individual.

Around 1800, at the peak of European autobiography writing, it was by no means self-evident that a woman would want to write her life story. But also a small farmer and door-to-door yarn salesman such as Ulrich Bräker found it difficult to present his autobiography, thus showing a similar kind of deviance from exclusion individuality. Bräker's *Lebensgeschichte und natürliche Ebenteuer des Armen Mannes im Tockenburg* (*Life Story and Natural Adventures of the Poor Man in Tockenburg*, 1789) meanders between pietist accounting, autobiographical family chronicling, literary models, and escapist writing and storytelling for pleasure of the 'poor man' from Toggenburg, Switzerland. The hybrid nature of the form is certainly not due to alleged poor writing skills

⁴¹ Cf., a.o., P.J. EAKIN, "Relational selves, relational lives: The story of the story", in: *True Relations*, ed. G.T. COUSER and J. FICHTELBERG (Westport, 1998), pp. 63-81.

of the author. That the impression of the ‘patchwork’, of the gleaned,⁴² causes aesthetic pleasure is due to the fact that this form is suited to the content, to the description of an existence that varied between self-obsession and dissolution of an identity, combativeness and harmoniousness, proximity and distance, pietism and enlightenment, yearning and satisfaction, and a social situation between early entrepreneurship and sub-proletariat, and that it does not allow itself to be inserted in closed form in the retrospective narrative of a linear personality development. So he was not really excluded from social sub-systems but ‘was caught in the middle’, and in none of the subsystems – and also in none of social strata – did he have an accurately defined place.

Since the text seems to document this in-between situation, the sometimes outrageous stories he tells us thus often have to be framed with legitimising prefaces by the writer and others. The outcome is a kind of patchwork appearance of the text as a whole. It was the achievement of gender-oriented literary studies to point out the special quality and clear-sightedness of so much mishmash – by freeing it from the gender blindness of old evaluation hierarchies and recognising the dependence of the evaluation criteria of genre norms and gender orders. In combination with studies on twentieth-century and contemporary self-concepts they show that such mishmash is no marginality and aesthetic breakdown but a seismographic recording of human feelings. This should not to be forgotten when the change of self-conceptions is told in Luhmannian social theory.

⁴² Cf. for the different literary sources and influences of Bräkers ego-documents *Schreibsucht: Autobiographische Schriften des Pietisten Ulrich Bräker (1735-1798)*, ed. A. MESSERLI and A. MUSCHG (Göttingen, 2004), esp. K.-D. MÜLLER, “Leben: Schreiben: Zu Bräkers Autobiographie”, pp. 26-37, at pp. 29 ff.

Expressing Your Self in Later Medieval England: Individuality and Social Differentiation

DAVID GARY SHAW

Niklas Luhmann and Medieval Individuality

How might historians, especially pre-modern historians, make use of sociological systems theory and particularly the approach of Niklas Luhmann to advance their work? And how might their conclusions about the nature of the past be of use to those who are trying to discern the distinctive nature of contemporary life without overlooking the enduring historical component? In this respect, many have found that understanding the meaning of individuality in any historical epoch benefits from attempting to compare it to other historical moments, and this is what Luhmann encouraged.

On the question examined by this volume, the place and meaning of the individual in the pre-modern period, Luhmann's sociology is a suggestive guide. Luhmann was an impressively subtle and complex thinker, and this complexity and even ambiguity extends to his understanding of individuality and the individual. Perhaps no one else has meant exactly what he did when the term 'individual' is mentioned. Even if his definition is accepted or somehow

Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 121-149.

integrated, the question of the historical place of the individual with respect to the social world must be addressed. Here too his views are striking, somewhat less original but clearly stimulating. How, as a social thing, does the individual relate to the larger social whole? Luhmann's short answer was: quite differently in the thirteenth than in the twentieth century, and he thus provided a hypothesis for historians to examine. These two issues – what is the individual and how did / does it relate to the social world then and now – will provide the distant theoretical frame for my chapter, and I shall briefly sketch them to provide a Luhmann perspective. After that theoretical introduction, the paper will seek to bring Luhmann in contact with some fifteenth-century English evidence of what appears to be individual selves trying, as it were, to fit in, and in the process inventing a sort of expressive individuality,¹ possibly even that atomistic individuality that reveals people pulling away from group identities. I shall conclude by suggesting that if there is something in what Luhmann thought about the character of the medieval self, the English fifteenth century shows itself to be an age of transition, in which a more autonomous self was being revealed. The later Middle Ages deserves 'credit' as a century where some hints of the 'modern' can be found. While I do not adopt Luhmann's framework in its entirety, since I am too attached to the union of psychic and social systems, I am confident that it would be useful for historians to reflect more and more fully on Luhmann's form of systems theory.

For present purposes, Luhmann's work has two points of importance: the nature of the individual within systems theory and the historically variable mode by which the individual functions within a particular social system. Historians interested in Luhmann have tended to engage only the second one of these topics, which is understandable, since it has an explicit impact on thinking about social history and the large-scale changes observed in Western societies. However, at least some acquaintance with Luhmann's concept of the individual is needed if the significance of his claims about the individual in society is to be properly understood.

In fact, Niklas Luhmann was aware that even the conceptualisation of the individual had a medieval and scholastic origin. Luhmann often pointed out the significance of the late scholastic philosopher Suarez, whose 'individual' was

¹ I insist here on 'individuality' rather than 'individualism'. Either way, homage must go to Robert N. Bellah, in: R.N. BELLAH, R. MADSEN, W.M. SULLIVAN, A. SWIDLER, and S.M. TIPTON, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 2nd edn. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1996; orig. edn. 1985), p. 27, although I do not mean to invoke the specifics of his terms or the contrast to 'utilitarian individualism'.

a metaphysical concept with nothing especially human about it.² ‘Individual’ was not yet a unique substitute for ‘person’ or ‘self’ or ‘human subject’. Michel Foucault and others joined Luhmann in putting their fingers on the seventeenth century, just after Suarez, as the key moment for this cultural construct – the individual as subject.³ Luhmann saw the Cartesian moment as the calcification of the medieval problematic, but, as he put it:

the medieval scholastic debate had settled one thing about the individuality of the individual: individuality cannot be defined by pointing to some special quality of the individual ...; it is not something given to the individual from outside. An individual is itself the source of its own individuality; the concept of individuality therefore has to be defined by self-reference.⁴

In making that point, Luhmann was in fact smuggling in some large claims that sit at the heart of his formulation of systems theory. The individual (certainly as a psychic being) should be conceived of as a system of its own.

As conceived from the seventeenth century, this individual human subject was the apparent ground and bearer of all representations and therefore came to have a foundational character for the rest of reality. Luhmann abhorred this view and sought to overcome its influence in contemporary thought: he rejected a “transcendental” aspect of the “individual” who “leaves the world in order to look at it”.⁵ Thus, for Luhmann whatever an individual person is, it must be an empirical rather than a transcendental sort of thing. Luhmann liked the terms ‘psychic system’, ‘consciousness’ and ‘personal system’ for the individual person, and these point to the empirical zone he believed was at issue.⁶

For Luhmann, the individual person as a social participant is a facilitator of communication but is only in certain respects a component of the social

² E.g. N. LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, trans. J. BEDNARZ, Jr. with D. BAECKER (Stanford, CA, 1995), pp. 257 and 557, citing Suarez’ *Dispositiones Metaphysicae*. For an account of the approaches, cf. P. KING, “The problem of individuation in the Middle Ages”, *Theoria* 66 (2000), pp. 159-184.

³ Of course, not all scholasticism is medieval. Cf. M. FOUCAULT, *Les mots et les choses – une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris, 1966).

⁴ N. LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual,” in: *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T.C. HELLER et al. (Stanford, CA, 1986), pp. 313-325, at p. 314. It is possible to think that from this insight a clear focus on the self as an individual through which the world is manifest could be defended, but for Luhmann the system of the self is not part of the system of the world, its environment.

⁵ LUHMANN, “Individuality of the Individual”, p. 319.

⁶ LUHMANN, “Individuality of the individual”, p. 320.

world. As a psychological being, as a meaning maker, as a biological organism, human beings are other things as well. But as Luhmann stresses, “There is no ecological system”.⁷ Holism is not on the table. Those who are unsettled by Luhmann are likely to rally round the flag of interconnectivity, and I should admit that my preliminary dissatisfaction with Luhmann emerges in this area as well. To speak of individuality within Luhmann’s theory is to speak of something that is partly an illusion, partly an artefact, but partly a puzzle of what he calls ‘interpenetration’, the play of two different systems, particularly the social and the psychic, each of which provides an environment for the other, but remains separate. There is no unity of self or ego assumed, nor a fusion of private and social self, or of spirit and body.

It is at this tantalising point that I can break off the examination of the general concept of the individual person according to Luhmann, admittedly just as it becomes particularly interesting and challenging. However, I need to warn those who would use Luhmann for history that understanding how his views on this puzzle affect his views of the individual could be quite important. His thoughts about individuals and societies are really quite secondary to his more general views about individuals and systems.⁸ Yet, there are elements to doubt about this theory of the “individuality of the individual”. E.g., the model is based on systems theory and assumes it accordingly, including the weak relationship between the psyche and society, e.g. The proof that this is actually so is never developed. This means, however, that the supposed separateness of psychic self from social roles could and perhaps should be criticised and at least studied. Notwithstanding Luhmann’s great emphasis on ‘interpenetration’, one suspects that systems are better understood as being more integrated with each other than he supposes, and especially systems that involve the conscious person directly.⁹ Luhmann would argue that our main problem has been exaggerating the importance of the *cogito* as a holistic unifier, but it is possible still to doubt that he has made the correct decision, at least insofar as the social world is involved. Even allowing Luhmann’s approach, is history

⁷ N. LUHMANN, *Essays on Self-Reference* (New York, 1990), p. 116.

⁸ The best, most detailed statement in English is LUHMANN, *Social Systems*; among key later German sources: N. LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik: Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft*, 5 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1980-1998); and ID., *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997).

⁹ Especially in the excellent summary of Luhmann’s developed view in LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, pp. 210-254, or as developed centrally in N. LUHMANN, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. J. GAINES and D.L. JONES (Stanford, CA, 1998), pp. 172-179.

especially involved with the social world as opposed to the world of consciousness? The limited role Luhmann imagines for the individual within the social world would not apply to the world of personal consciousness. Something like the self must be central in that domain. Sociology may not focus on consciousness, but history might often need to and so we might still believe that agency and the self must be the starting point for any inquiry into the historical if not the sociological self.

Without question, however, Luhmann's second contribution to the analysis of individuality is his most famous one among historians. Luhmann was unusually sensitive to the fact that individuality and the individual had a history, not just on the conceptual level but also in its relation to society. Let me be clear: this is not about how to balance the individual and society. It is a dynamic and historically informed view about how the individual social person related to the wider society and how that relationship has changed.¹⁰

For Luhmann and other social theorists, the medieval world entered the story of the individual as the background to the development of the modern world; the Middle Ages have in various ways, in different moments, played their role as modernity's predecessor or other. Luhmann was aware of how glibly the concept of the 'modern' could be used to chastise the past, and his goals were to seek an honest engagement with the nature of modernity; he was a long way from a supporter of modernisation theories, but was certain that the late medieval and early modern period had ushered in significant change in the nature of European society.¹¹ While it is fair to say that medieval historians at least have never achieved a consensus on this subject, either on its importance or its meaning, many of them have worried that Luhmann did not understand the medieval situation well enough to use it as even a presupposition for his definition of modernity.¹² It is as clear, however, that the character of medieval society and its relation to modernity and postmodernity has received fresh impetus from Luhmann's position.¹³

The medieval individuality debate started with Jacob Burckhardt's most revolutionary claim that the Renaissance discovered the individual and the

¹⁰ Luhmann has interesting remarks on the process of making a past account in the context of the concept of modernity. See N. LUHMANN, *Observations on Modernity*, trans. W. WHOBERY (Stanford, CA, 1998), p. 3.

¹¹ Cf. again, LUHMANN, *Observations on Modernity*, p. 3.

¹² The conference behind this volume was punctuated by a refrain about Luhmann's failure to adequately understand the medieval situation.

¹³ The present volume helps to make this clear.

related claim that in the earlier, medieval period people knew themselves only as part of a group.¹⁴ Luhmann's reflections on the medieval can indeed appear only as a refinement of this old insight / argument / error: Luhmann does not dispute that the medieval world had individuals – given his understanding of the idea as I have already sketched it – but insofar as they were parts of society they needed to be located somewhere. Social persons were “normally anchored in a family or a household ... *in order* to be considered as individuals. Individuality occurs through inclusion in society and only thereby” (my emphasis).¹⁵ Writ more largely, he argued that medieval society was differentiated by stratification; but one of the meanings of modernity would be the new way that individuals associated with society, namely in terms of diverse functions rather than by total integration by persona or social type.

Put otherwise, the individual person in modern society cannot be absorbed by some collective group, whether the family or the guild or one's general social status, ‘degree’, as a medieval Englishman might have put it. Rather, modernity is characterised by functional differentiation, which means in part that the society finds itself divided into subsystems according to a variety of functions. Individuals then participate in these, e.g., being a member of a political party, having a job, without these wholly constituting or exhausting the social identity of the individual. Since at least the seventeenth century, according to Luhmann, such subdivision has been underway, changing the way in which the individual fits in society. As he put it: “*In der modernen Gesellschaft lassen sich die konkreten Individuen nicht mehr konkret placier[en]*” (“In modern society, the concrete individual finds no place [for him / herself as a whole]”).¹⁶ Its fundamental perspective is outside any particular social position. The individual “*hat seinen Standort in sich selbst und außerhalb der Gesellschaft*” (“has its standpoint within itself and outside society”).¹⁷

Previously, in the Middle Ages, social involvement was more totalising. The social system was differentiated ‘vertically’. It is perhaps significant that

¹⁴ J. BURCKHARDT, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance*, trans. S.G.C. MIDDLEMORE, 5th edn. (London, 1904), pp. 129-170.

¹⁵ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 347: “*Individuen mußten irgendwo in der Gesellschaft, und das heißt für den Normalfall: in einer Familie oder einem Familienhaushalt verankert sein, um als Individuen zu gelten. ... Individualität wurde durch Inklusion in die Gesellschaft und nur so erreicht*”.

¹⁶ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 2, p. 624.

¹⁷ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 212. I thank Franz-Josef Arlinghaus for assistance in identifying references in notes 14-16.

in contemporary society the very notion of self-conscious ‘social standing’ tends to meaninglessness. When shopping or in the cinema, we are all patrons or clients – the words shed their hierarchy even as a binary expression – pretty much the same. Such a lack of stratification or hierarchy seems very unmedieval. As those who admire Luhmann realised, the medieval period was stratified and, as he put it:

A societal system that is vertically differentiated according to the principle of stratification presupposes that societal differentiation is directed by kinds of persons, by their ‘quality’, by their determination to live in specific castes or ranked groups.¹⁸

The formulation is notable, for Luhmann – unlike some social theorists – conceives of persons acting, desiring, wanting, in this case, to play a certain role. Later, in modernity, they would not want this particular integration any longer, or perhaps could no longer achieve it.

The key question for this paper is: when did this become the case or start to become the case? I think we can at least hypothesise that the transition from medieval to modern in terms of the individual’s relation to society was underway in fifteenth-century England. If the Middle Ages as a whole holds a special place in the history of individuality and the study of the self just because it is the time where our confidence about the individual disappears, the later Middle Ages clearly opens the door to the modern. That time period may be key, as Burckhardt supposed. The great debates about Renaissance individualism percolated through the twentieth century as much as claims in favour of the existence of rich, medieval individuality.¹⁹ While our picture of pre-1300 society urgently needs re-consideration, we can add nuance to our understanding of this great late medieval transition.

¹⁸ LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, p. 193.

¹⁹ Cf., e.g. W. ULLMANN, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, MD, 1966); C.M. MORRIS, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (London, 1972); A. GUREVICH, *The Origins of European Individualism*, trans. K. JUDELSON (Oxford, 1995); J. BENTON, “Consciousness of self and perceptions of individuality, I”, in: *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R.L. BENSON and G. CONSTABLE (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 263-295; C.W. BYNUM, “Did the twelfth century discover the individual?”, in: EAD., *Jesus as Mother: Studies in Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1982), pp. 82-109; B. BEDOS-REZAK, “L’ Individu, c’est l’autre: Signes d’identité et principes d’altérité au XII^e siècle”, in: *L’Individu au Moyen Age: Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*, ed. B. BEDOS-REZAK and D. IOGNA-PRAT (Paris, 2005), pp. 43-57, 311-316; M. CLANCHY, “Documenting the self: Abelard and the individual in history”, *Historical Research* 76 (August, 2003), pp. 293-309.

To answer the question of how the individual fits within society, we need to consider perceptions of social organisation, but we should also be focussed on the place where systems and environments seem to come together, that is, with the self as the agent and centre of reflection. It will be useful to consider individual people like William Worcestre, a scholar and traveller, and Thomas Hoccleve, a poet and bureaucrat, fifteenth-century men who wrote unusually and credibly. We may be able to see the individual as being integrated into society in a hybrid or vacillating form, moving from social integration through stratification towards modernity's weak integration through functional differentiation. Later medieval evidence is consistent with the idea that the drive to functional differentiation had begun, that personal identity was in many respects more flexible, less secure than it had once been. What would appear, however, to be underrepresented in Luhmann is the importance of individual people in fashioning their identities, and this is a feature and effect of their having something to say about it. It is an aspect to which we shall give prominence.²⁰

For many scholars of course, the true or full individual is indeed a companion of modernity, the idea represented best perhaps in the nineteenth-century bourgeois diary, in the techniques of subjectivity, or viewed more progressively as the achievement of a project of emancipation, the noble dream of Enlightenment.²¹ On either sort of account, the pre-modern is at best (or worst) 'on the way'. Certainly, in evaluating the importance of the individual in the later Middle Ages, the problem of self-expression remains a key obstacle. We might conceive self-expression as a possible form of communication, the sinews of Luhmann's conception of the social. Within the tale of the incorporation of the individual into the social world of the later Middle Ages, we may say that self-expression is the agent-centred approach to the issue of social inclusion. Expression of social type is a mark of inclusion into the family or appropriate social group or stratum. This would still allow us to say that the modes by which a self can be expressed were certainly varied.

In the rest of this article, I shall explore some later medieval social ideas about self-expression prevalent in England and then extend these to the selves manifest in the writings of those two very particular fifteenth-century men. I

²⁰ This is partly a consequence of focussing on communication rather than actions.

²¹ P. GAY, *The Bourgeois Experience: From Victoria to Freud*, 5 vols. (New York, 1984-1998), comes to mind; see also J. SEIGEL, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge and New York, 2005), pp.87-426; C. TAYLOR, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1989).

push away from Luhmann here, as I hope we shall emerge with a sense of the nature of the social self as a zone of interpenetration between person (individual psychic system) and society (social system). In other words, I want to name and reify the patterns of interpenetration in the later Middle Ages. The social self is this zone. Moreover, its strengthening pattern might reveal the transitional character of the later Middle Ages. It will also raise questions about the relation of social systems theory to history and suggest the enduring utility of concepts such as agency and the self to enrich the historical study of the individual in its world.

Self-Expression in the Later Middle Ages

Considering self-expression in the later medieval context, however, inevitably raises a series of challenges. We should have doubts about how often and how important art and writing were to manifesting that historical self. Talk might of course have played that role in the past, but this just highlights the great trouble we have with evidence. Traditions and models for such self-expression would have been few in number; moreover, novelty and the newfangled were given no particular premium in the period. If the self was inside everyone, waiting to get out, the later Middle Ages, at least in the England my evidence comes from, was going to be a difficult time. It will be difficult to decide whether people were thinking as Luhmann expected medieval people to act or not. After all, expressing oneself when novelty was not at a premium might mean doing something very similar to what anybody else would do, which raises further epistemological challenges. However, such a view would in part validate Luhmann's understanding because the self in such a time – say, the stereotypical thirteenth century – would *not* be making a distinctive social impact at all. It would be fully subsumed, absorbed by its social position.²² Self-expression, we argue however, was part of the dynamic of communication, which Luhmann held to be the essence of the social system.

From my theoretical perspective, selves in the historical record are irrepressibly social. This means that they are manifest in social situations and are produced at least in part by social interaction. Self-expression occurs in a com-

²² Cf. the remark of M. RUBIN, "Identity", in: *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, ed. R. HORROX and W.M. ORMROD (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 383-412, at p. 411, touching the later period, on this point.

plex context, a meeting of world and individual. Actor and viewer, viewer and actor, role reversed minute to minute. To this extent, I agree with a germ of Luhmann's great insight that communication, which is never just about one individual, is a key concept for understanding social life and such individual life as there is.²³ The self at work in this moment is the social self, for whom an important feature is other selves, linked by communication.²⁴ Self-expression can be like a sermon preached to a jaded crowd, who will judge the preacher afterwards and rate him on his performance. The social effect is not the actor's *feeling* of individuality but the rating or evaluating of that individual within the context of the group, under the gaze of the other. Words, gestures, the company you keep and what you own and what clothes you wear, all might go into shaping this constantly changing self.

In other words, self-expression was a way of manifesting individuality that addresses Luhmann's framework. We might track a development towards something like his functional differentiation or towards the development of a more individualistic self. Clearly, I link the psychic and social, for the drive towards expression is the self as psyche attempting to negotiate or communicate in the social world or system. Some evidence of this social self and its relationship to the development of potentially more atomistic individuality can be gleaned by examining some late medieval English social legislation. Across Europe in the later Middle Ages, sumptuary legislation was passed that sought to regulate certain forms of consumption, most notably dress, but also in some places food, banqueting, public displays of mourning, and the like.²⁵ England was part of this. Parliament passed bills in 1363, 1463, 1478, and 1510.²⁶ In other words, the entirety of the later Middle Ages worked under the shadow of such legislation, which persisted deep into the early modern period. Possibly

²³ Luhmann's relationship to the work of George Herbert Mead needs further consideration, since Mead's focus on communication, much discussed and developed by Jürgen Habermas. E.g. J. HABERMAS, "The paradigm shift in Mead", in: *Philosophy, Social Theory, and the Thought of George Herbert Mead*, ed. M. ABOULAFIA *et al.* (Albany, NY, 1991), pp. 137-168, would seem similar and useful for Luhmann as well. See G.H. MEAD, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. C.W. MORRIS (Chicago, 1934), pp. 51-81.

²⁴ Luhmann criticises the social self of Mead *et al.* in LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, p. 260, but the conception can be wider and more flexible. Cf. D.G. SHAW, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York, 2005), pp. 11-16. In Mead's mature work, the self *is* the social self; I'm not quite that confident, but at any rate retention of this phrase highlights the *social* aspect of the self. See MEAD, *Mind, Self and Society*, pp. 135-226.

²⁵ F.E. BALDWIN, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore, 1923); C. KOVESI KILLERBY, *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200-1500* (Oxford, 2002).

²⁶ In addition, petitions seeking legislation were promoted in 1379 and 1402.

a sign of the lack of the valuation of the individual and the favouring of the group and of a static social world, unique displays of clothing were being discouraged legislatively.

But it might be argued that such legislation proved the full emergence of the society of differentiated estates, fully replacing the old imaginary of the three orders of peasants, knights, and priests, or the simple local expansions of greater and lesser sorts notable in town life. The world of many estates and types is prominent in the literary traditions of the period, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and, in another way, in John Lydgate's popular fifteenth-century rendition of the French *Danse Macabre*, the *Dance of Death*, both of which outline the detailed vision of a differentiated society.²⁷

"If we understand clothing as event-based communication, the element reproducing and perpetuating the same is communication through clothing and not communication about clothing".²⁸ This view of sociologist and systems theory adapter Cornelia Bohn exactly expresses the assumptions of the perspective of the social self as well as systems theory. Wearing clothing involved communication, and on an apparently increasing basis in the later Middle Ages. There can be no doubt that the legislation shows a good deal of estates mentality and social control, but this included a moral vision too and *that* assumed an individual social self in need of disciplining. So we have a Luhmannesque medieval linking of the individual by virtue of a sort of group or hierarchical standing, as well as a moral part, possibly relating more to the individual, 'psychic' person. What is more, however, the very process of moving from a small number of orders towards a wider variety of types suggests the emergence of elements of modernity's functional differentiation.

Interestingly, these laws originated as petitions from the House of Commons, and were in some ways the commons against themselves.²⁹ In 1463, the petition claimed that action was needed to avoid "... the complete destruction of the husbandry of this your realm".³⁰ Sumptuary legislation was moral legis-

²⁷ A classic literary source is J. MANN, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge, 1973).

²⁸ C. BOHN, "Clothing as medium of communication", trans. M. PETZKE, at www.unilu.ch/files/clothing-as_medium3.pdf (consulted 4 June 2010), p. 8; original German version: "Kleidung als Kommunikationsmedium", in: C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), pp. 95-127.

²⁹ Second, the reasons adduced are striking. The fear was partly economic: it was argued in the 1363 petition, e.g., that 'prices of various victuals within the realm are greatly increased because various people of various conditions wear various apparel not appropriate to their estate'.

³⁰ *Rotuli Parliamentorum; ut et Petitiones, et Placita in Parlamento*, ed. J. STRACHEY *et*

lation, seeking to keep the country in a manageable and sustainable condition. It was indeed opposed to excess, but I believe that sumptuary legislation tried to limit expressive choice in a world in which people were increasingly determining how they wanted to dress and to act, but as the 1473 Act said, “for want of punishment and their enforcement”, the earlier laws had been ineffective. People mainly could not be restrained, but as important in the long history of European mores is the fact that the various laws (among other evidences) show us something new, the burgeoning amount of social gradation and variety.

People were not slotting themselves into new categories; they were making them. This sounds quite a bit like differentiation, but not a functional, rather a personal one. Indeed, that word ‘various’ was a mantra of the legislative preamble. The legislators knew that there were all sorts of people, acting in all sorts of different ways. Perhaps this was not what had been known in 1100 when a more stable medieval hierarchy existed: hence no English sumptuary legislation or its equivalent in those days. Far from limiting distinction, this late medieval legislation shows a world succumbing to it and to some degree assuming it: consider a clause from the 1363 legislation. In a schedule of rules starting at the bottom of the social world and working up, second from the foot is this clause, which can stand for all:

Also, that craftsmen and people called yeomen shall not take or wear cloth for their clothing or shoes of a higher price than 40s. for the whole cloth, by way of purchase or otherwise; nor precious stones, cloth of silk or silver, or a belt, knife, brooch, ring, garter, or clasps, ribbons, chains, bracelets, seals or other things of gold or silver, or any manner of apparel embroidered, enamelled or of silk, in any way. And that their wives, daughters and children shall be of the same condition in their clothing and apparel; and that they shall not wear any veil of silk, but only of yarn made within the realm, and or any manner or fur ... except only that of lamb, rabbit, cat and fox.³¹

Indirectly, the law describes what people were doing beyond what a paternalistic Parliament may have thought best, but it seems clear that some crafts-

al., 6 vols. (London, 1767-1777), 5, p. 506a. Derek Neal has recently argued that ‘husbandry’ pointed to a crucial element in later medieval English masculinity. As he describes it: “‘Husbandry’ includes governance, but also puts a strong emphasis on management, care, economy and prudence. It also implies respect for one’s own, which is ultimately a form of self-knowledge. These aspects of husbandry strongly affected a man’s place in the social world of men” (D.G. NEAL, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago, 2008), p. 58).

³¹ *Statutes of the Realm*, 2 vols. (London, 1810-1816), 1, pp. 380-382.

men were wearing fur. The legislation represented the bounding of a very diverse world along lines of socio-political prominence. It was a world rapidly showing divergent personal identities, fluid even during a lifetime. It was characteristically a world that virtually invented shopping for display.³² The effect of counterfeit was high and the corruption of wealth was now possible, but there are signs that the individual self, here clearly an agent, is conceived as likely to be difficult to know and shifty in his or her social expression through consumption. To paraphrase Derek Neal: “we learn only half the story if we take the meanings of the social self [masculinity] from the voices of authority”.³³ The other half is found in rule breaking and the subtle work that can be within conformity.³⁴

People often could choose their clothes and food and did so with an understanding of the norms, of the social imaginary in which the individual sought to place him- or herself; such rules do not only empower the group. Indeed, the very fact that people could misstep and seem out of their proper group points to the creative social self, possibly to the emergence of a new form of differentiation. It is certainly striking that a key impetus of the 1478 legislation was some doubt and presumable dispute over what clothing was allowed to those who had served as urban mayors and aldermen and their families after they no longer were in office. Such a concern is about managing social and economic success, changing status, and people’s desire to communicate their superior standing. It is about social order being brought to the ambitious dynamism of striving social selves.

Recognition is a chief piece of social identity and the social self. It can be understood in terms of communication, for it is the necessary receipt of a message by other social players. But the legislation we are looking at was not seeking recognition for the group of ex-aldermen, but for the individuals or families in that position. This is different from other legislation honouring, e.g., a civic corporation or a craft guild. On the other hand, being rejected or assessed adversely by those around one, officially or casually, was crucial in this age. Much can be learned from the function of the late medieval butler, who in a dining hall was to seat people according to their ‘degree’. He had to judge or

³² Cf. E. WELCH, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven, CT, 2005).

³³ NEAL, *Masculine Self*, p. 175.

³⁴ Of course, this raises grave questions about what was really going on in the eleventh or twelfth centuries as well; sociologists like historians may have relied too much upon the louder voices of authority.

learn to identify a person's identity and rank and then to place him or her at tables on which the food reflected in variety and quality the diner's social position. Discrimination was needed because the world was often a mass of people working on their social status, changing with honours or wealth, with desire, dreaming or fraud.³⁵ We can consider the well-known mystic Margery Kempe, a bourgeois woman from the English borough of Lynn. Rejection was a trope of her life; it was penitential, but one of the notable areas of derision was around her clothing. Her book says that even once she had committed to God,

sche wold not leven her pride or her pompowys aray that sche had used befortym And yet sche wist ful wel that men seden hyr ful mech velany, for sche wered gold pypys on her heved and hyr hodes with the typetts were daggyd. Her clokys also were dagged and layed with diverse colours between daggys, that it schuld be the mor staryng to mennys sygh and herself the more ben worshepd.³⁶

So at least in her eyes or those of her scribe, the goal of her excessive apparel was worship and attention, but her husband's fear at least was that it would achieve the opposite because it displayed in effect a lack of husbandry, a lack of fit with her actual social position. She would be communicating the wrong message. Later on she changed her clothes and wore virginal white, notwithstanding her marriage and many children, and she was reviled anew. Wrong though her decisions seemed to be, she was making them and adopting identities in a way that shows agency but may also show the sort of typological imagination that fits to some extent the 'medieval' model Luhmann expected.

Further recognition of the diversity and fluidity of social identity can also be seen in the *Statute of Additions* in 1413.³⁷ This was a bureaucratic law that sought to add to the names of suitors in a variety of legal actions, "specifying their estate or degree, or their occupation, and the towns, hamlets, or places, along with the counties, in which they were, are or should be living". Its goals aside, the statute shows an understanding of the specific social space that every individual occupied. Estate and locality added to name brought us very close to the social individual. It is ambiguous for our concerns. It points up a particular person but uses associations of social status, trade and place to identify him

³⁵ Cf. e.g. John Russell, "Boke of Nurture", ed. in: *Babees Book*, ed. F.J. FURNIVALL (London, 1868: *Early English Text Society* 32), pp. 115-239, at pp. 187-189.

³⁶ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. B. WINDEATT (Harlow, 1999), p. 57.

³⁷ *Statutes of the Realm*, 2, 1 Hen V, c. 5.

/ her. Identification is the key and particularly the goal of picking out the particular right person.

Social legislation and social regulation were key elements of later medieval English society. They reflected a social imaginary of estates and a moral goal of control. These estates show considerable and, I think, growing social differentiation. We know that a Margery Kempe did dress and that she was aware that such dress might press her forward in social space in a way likely to distinguish her. People read her social expression as she had read theirs. Simple class standing, 'middle class woman', was usually not the relevant aspect of distinction. Her actions must be interpreted alongside the sumptuary legislation, the usual care for the person manifested in the self-expression of dress, even of conformist dress. But taken together, they suggest that the social expression of self was very diverse and that the prevalent social perception was attuned to the possibilities of such social selves at all status levels. More self was possible, and that might mean more room for something like individuality. If so, this at least suggests we can see some of the chronological shift Luhmann had expected at work in English life after the plague and certainly in the fifteenth century.

Thomas Hoccleve

Thus, sumptuary legislation makes very clear that in the fifteenth century people had a growing variety of ways to express themselves, and this meant in part to locate themselves in social space, in a range of valued practices, some gendered, some emblematic of social or economic standing. Such expression can of course be conceived more explicitly as communication, à la Luhmann, but I would not want to lose the element of fundamental connection to the ego, to an individual actor. One of the advantages of using the term 'self' (or 'subject' for that matter) is that it leaves the key question of the autonomy or indeed uniqueness of any social expression to the side; in other words, it allows us to delay the question of individuality without neglecting what people did and what it meant to them and those around them. Against this general vision of selves in society, I want to explore two individuals and the quality of their fifteenth-century individuality, men in what I have been suggesting was indeed a transitional age. This may help to challenge a little any assumptions that would line up apparent interest in the interior self with disengagement from the

social self. The two people, both men, are the civil servant and poet Thomas Hoccleve and the 'riding servant' and scholar William Worcestre.

These two men are certainly extraordinary and have left extraordinary evidence, certainly for England. Thomas Hoccleve can startle because he seems to have a great deal of self for a late medieval person; he has that apparent individuality that seems like uniqueness, a somewhat different sense of individual than we have so far used in this paper, but inevitably related. He can be distinguished from all the others. He was born around 1367 and we know he worked from around age twenty as a clerk of the Privy Seal, one of the main royal chanceries, where he was sufficiently senior in the bureaucracy that he wrote the departmental formulary of documents in his last years; he died in 1426.³⁸

His most important work was the *Regiment of Princes*, a book of political advice and ethics. In the opening lines, he tells us, as if historically, that as he was

Musynge upon the restlees bysynesse
Which that this troublous world hath ay on honde,
That othir thyng than fruyt of bittirnesse
Ne yildith naght, as I can undirstonde,
At Chestres In, right faste by the Stronde,
As I lay in my bed upon a nyght,
Thoght me byrefte of sleep the force and might.

And many a day and nyght that wikkid hyne [cruel fellow]
Hadde beforne vexed my poore goost
So greuously that of angwissh and pyne
No rycher man was nowhere in no coost.
This dar I seyn, may no wight make his boost
That he with thoght was bet than I aqweynted,
For to the deeth he wel ny hath me feynted.³⁹

Here, we know, is a self on display, an individual for sure. Moreover, there is much in Hoccleve's verse that is not only reflective but that probes emotions, psychological states, and interiority. He allows us to raise again that question: what is the relation of self and individuality to interiority, an inner psychic

³⁸ J. BURROW, *Thomas Hoccleve* (Aldershot, 1994).

³⁹ *Thomas Hoccleve: The Regiment of Princes*, ed. C.R. BLYTH (Kalamazoo, MI, 1999), at <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hoccfm.htm> (accessed last June 1, 2010), lines 1-14.

space so well rooted that we can miss its metaphorical nature. Luhmann might be said to warn us against taking the psychic for the social, but he also authorises us to see that the one affects the other through the interpenetration of systems. Again, I argue that that is not quite enough and that this self as psychic is part of the social through interpretive actions and meaning making such as Hoccleve's poetry shows.

Hoccleve provides this interiority when reflecting on himself or speaking in the poet's persona. This has the characteristics of the melancholic.⁴⁰ We have almost a Romantic sensibility, i.e. a nineteenth-century complex here: poet, literally bemused with painful thought, unable to sleep and in a very particular place, a man in the dark in Chester's Inn next to the Strand in Westminster. The next day Hoccleve goes out and is so taken up by thought, which he repeatedly associates with heaviness and unhappiness, that he is unresponsive: an old man walks up to him and in the end must actually hit him to get a response. As Hoccleve writes:

He stirte unto me and seide, "Sleepstow, man?
Awake!" and gan me shake wondir faste,⁴¹ (lines 131-132)

"Sleepstow, man? Awake!" Here is a man isolated as a self, to whom access must be fought. Now, Thomas Hoccleve suffered from his thoughts, from his interiority, we might say. He even wrote once: "The thinking person is a vessel of torment".⁴² In showing us a bit of the thoughtful, inward man, he is showing us a man troubled by reflection: self-reflection that is neither clarifying nor therapeutic. It is a painful loop of self-reference. If this is individuality rampant, it is also the invention of a new form of pain.

⁴⁰ I thank Marina Münkler for pointing this theme out to me. Cf. M. MÜNKLER, "Melancholy and despair: The 'Historia von D. Johann Fausten'", in: *Melancholie – zwischen Attitüde und Diskurs: Konzepte in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. A. WITTSTOCK and A. SIEBER (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 75-93; *Melancholie – zwischen Attitüde und Diskurs; Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art*, ed. R. KLIBANSKY, E. PANOFSKY, and F. SAXL (New York, 1964); and C. HEFFERNAN, *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Early Medicine* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1995). As a type, it could itself be assimilated to a putative group or category and therefore taken out of the purely individual. Of course, the label is ours, not Hoccleve's.

⁴¹ *Thomas Hoccleve: The Regiment of Princes* at: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/hoccfm.htm> (accessed last June 1, 2010).

⁴² *Ibid.*, ll.82 "The thoughtful wight is vessel of torment".

What wight that inly pensyf is, I trowe,
 His moost desir is to be solitarie.
 That this is sooth, in my persone I knowe,
 For evere whyl that fretynge adversarie
 Myn herte made to him tributarie
 In sowkyng of the fressheste of my blood; (85-90)

Hoccleve more than once shows this desire for alienation, a sort of fascination for a dangerous isolation, atypical of the social self. We see what appears to be an inner man, but it is in fact a failing social person.

For Hoccleve or his persona, we know, it was the sign as well of serious psychological disability. If twelfth-century writers, as Jay Rubinstein puts it, “discovered how to *think about*, and to *write about* the individual” the subsequent centuries in England do not seem to have particularly cultivated the art.⁴³ The fifteenth century may be important and full of change, but as with some of the earlier writers – such as Gerald of Wales – the individuals who undertook such performances seem rather odd, even questionable in their due appreciation of their social places. Add to Gerald, St Augustine and Abelard, men who wrote under great and peculiar pressure, and we may see a pattern: in fifteenth-century England, Hoccleve and the mystic Margery Kempe were under vast and perhaps distorting psycho-social difficulty. Hoccleve slipped his most self-centred work into other contexts, like the *Regiment*; and one suspects Margery Kempe’s scribes were expecting and waiting for the mystical parts of her remembrances, rather than for the exposure of her psychological oddity.

Ought individuality to be mainly associated with eccentricity or illness? Should we be wary of such sources? What sort of self can they show? Even a holistic approach or a semiotic one requires care about deriving the later medieval self or individual from these people. Nevertheless, we need to wonder about a reaction that might suggest that these are accounts of the psychic system that is not really acting socially. To start with, there is a communication underway, poet or mystic to reader or amanuensis. More deeply, there is the fact that while sociology may properly be limited to the social, history’s jurisdiction is at least as large as the human, psychic person included.

Nevertheless, particularly at such moments, historians need to guard against seeing the performance of interiority as a sign of cultural value in and of itself: that is anachronistic. Moreover, when Hoccleve’s most personal writ-

⁴³ Cf. J. RUBINSTEIN, “Biography and autobiography in the Middle Ages”, in: *Writing Medieval History*, ed. N. PARTNER (London, 2005), pp. 22-41, at p. 35.

ings are examined closely, they show not an Augustinian cultivation of private self engaged with God, but more certainly a self understood and constituted as a social self in crisis. Indeed, Hoccleve's precocious skill at dialogue seems an apt reflection of the fact that his private self is really his social self as well.⁴⁴ Let me develop this point from two additional works, *La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve* and then his *Series*. In the former, speaking of youth's foolishness and alienation from God, he writes:

But of hir ignorance herself shee soghte,
And kneew nat that shee dwelling was with thee⁴⁵

We have here the enticing image of a self seeking itself but not knowing where to look, but certainly the self that the poem tracks is one whose appraisal is made, whose value is established not just along the religious ordering to God but on the line of social vision, under the gaze of the social other who holds the later medieval social self to ransom. So, as the narrator runs out of money – it is after all a begging poem – he writes that

Despenses large enhaunce a mannes loos [reputation]
Whil they endure, and whan they be forbore
His name is deed. Men keepe hir mowthes cloos,
As nat a peny had he spent tofore.⁴⁶

Reputation is the goal here, and while he has it the poet's heaviness abated.

As his most compelling poem of the self, the *Series*, makes clear, however, one could not reliably drive such psychic heaviness away. Hoccleve's work is literally dis-eased, uncomfortable. It grows from the interior darkness towards the social world beyond. In his *My compleinte*, the first of the *Series*, he speaks honestly of "the thoughtful maladie" that "so vexed me"⁴⁷ and then of the more alarming "wilde infirmite / Wiche that I hadde", and this is important: "as many a man wel knewe". The wholly private self, pure interiority is not, cannot be perhaps, proven by reference to someone else.⁴⁸ Moreover, *that* is the self

⁴⁴ It is worth noting here that the term social self, often associated with Mead, is here used differently. For the mature Mead, there was no other sort of self than the social one.

⁴⁵ Thomas Hoccleve, *"My Compleinte" and Other Poems*, ed. R. ELLIS (Exeter, 2001), p. 65, ll. 43-44.

⁴⁶ *"My Compleinte"*, p. 74, ll. 345-348.

⁴⁷ *"My Compleinte"*, p. 115, l. 21.

⁴⁸ Of course, were one to follow Luhmann closely, one might need to say the opposite, that

that Hoccleve was concerned with: “Howe it with me stood was in euery mannes mouthe, and that full sore my frendis affirght[ed]”.

Hoccleve’s complaint is that “For though that my wit were hoom come again / Men wolde it not so vndirstonde or take. With me to dele hadden they disdein ... Min oolde frendshipe was al ouershaek”. Seeing the world see him – and misunderstand – cast him down:

For ofte whanne I in Westmynstir Halle,
And eke in Londoun, amonge the prees [crowd] went,
I sy the chere abaten and apalle
Of hem that weren wonte me for to calle
To companie. [Their heads they turned away
when I approached, as if they saw not me].⁴⁹

He wrote his complaint, and then in the second poem of the series we encounter a dialogue between the poet and a friend. His old friend comes over, asks what he was doing, hears the poem, i.e. the complaint. His friend asks immediately, “Sin we tweine been here, an no mo folke”, that is, it is a private conversation – so the consequences to the social self will be limited – “suffre me to speak”. The friend then asks about those very people whom he just mentioned as absent, the world: “Hast thou maad this compleint forth to goo / Amonge the peple?” He begs Thomas not to: “If thou be wiis, of that matter ho. / Reherse thou it not ne it awake. / Kepe al that cloos for thin honours sake”.⁵⁰ Honour is one of the key concepts underlying the later medieval social self, almost its synonym. The friend goes on to argue that everyone has forgotten about the incident, that the poet stands as well among people today as ever he has. Thomas does not agree, noting that the advice would be sound if he were a criminal, but his affliction had not been his fault.⁵¹ On both sides of the argument, the focus is again on the social self, on social identity. It remains the mode of Hoccleve’s imagination about himself. Hoccleve’s interiority turns out to be a man *in* the world, not out of it. Nevertheless, there is very little here to suggest that the individual was conceiving itself as a type, as merely itself

only by pointing to its limits and beyond can any system fully affirm itself as self-reference.

⁴⁹ “*My Compleinte*”, p. 117, line 72-77.

⁵⁰ “Had I be for an homicide iknowe / Or an extorcioner or a robbour, / Or for a coin clipper as wide yblowe / As was my seeknesse, or a werriour / Agein the feith, or a false maintenour / Of causes, though I had amendid me”, *ibid.*, p. 133.

⁵¹ “*My Compleinte*”, pp. 131-132.

when slotted into a particular status. Of course, perhaps that is what was wrong. Certainly, the desire to belong again socially was crucial, but there is no sign of a particular group to which Hoccleve thought he needed to adhere. The problem was of an individual coping with a generalised social world. It is a social self seeking integration, and that is a business of doing. It does not come easily, and his social status and job do not make it straightforward.

William Worcestre's Anomalies

But then there is the opposing problem of William Worcestre, who wrote much but said little about himself or anything that appears on first review as about his interiority or individual self. How do we fit him into our picture of the relationship between individual and social inclusion in the later Middle Ages? I want to explore his writings and particularly his trips and notes on the city of Bristol. He would seem to be a little closer to the fifteenth-century norm for a busy and educated man than Hoccleve. What sort of self can we see? What if we posited interiority? Where could we find it? What about the ordinary inexpressive medieval fellow? Or the many men and women who have much to say but rarely talk about themselves. I suspect they were not just like Thomas Hoccleve without the poems. Such an impulse is that of social history to some extent: find out about the regular person. So, having suggested that Hoccleve is a little less about the private than the social self than he at first appears, let me now try to see what of Worcestre shows something like the personal if not private from records that are not self-consciously self-centred or self-expressive. By the same token, he gives at least weak signs of a sort of social affiliation to Bristol itself, but it is as it were nostalgic, not his principal social identity and not easily made to support Luhmann's medieval schema. Does he also indicate the advent of a new mode of individuality?

William Worcestre (1415-c.1485) was the long-time secretary and agent of the very successful captain of war Sir John Fastolf. Worcestre has long had a slightly mixed reputation. A contemporary friar, John Brackley, thought ill of him, to be sure, warning mutual friends against trusting him. Through his poisoned vision we can, however, visualise Worcestre a little: Brackley described him as "*oculis luscus et denirato colore, in facie fuscus*" ("blind in one eye,

swarthy, and dark in complexion”) and goes on to remark that the face shows the soul too.⁵²

Worcestre was an undoubted intellectual, writing, editing and collecting texts. If his translations of Seneca, his editing of documents, his steps towards histories, and his treatise on virtue and politics, *The Boke of Noblesse*, are a credit to his strength of mind and endeavour, his fascination with annotation and enumeration, with constant counting points up something almost neurotic, the certain yet silly academic at the origin of scholarly historiography and geography.⁵³

Worcestre was a great traveller, and he took notes about some of his trips which collectively are known and have been published as his *Itineraries* and his *Topography of Bristol*. It is no surprise that the twentieth-century editor of the *Itineraries* was John Harvey, the industrious architectural historian of medieval England, for Worcester never saw a building he did not want to measure. While there is so much we do not know about any and every late medieval person, William Worcestre is one of the only ones the length of whose pace we know: it was roughly twenty-one inches and he counted paces to measure buildings.⁵⁴ We know these were part of the contents of his mind, the size of his body, but what about his self?

Worcestre spent most of his adult life centred in eastern England, working for Fastolf, but he was born in the large port city of Bristol, was at Oxford University in 1432, and shortly after was in Fastolf’s employ. After Fastolf’s death in 1459, Worcestre acted as an executor for Sir John’s will, a time consuming task. In later life, notably from 1478-1480, he made extensive notes of a mainly geographical and historical nature about trips he took, mainly across England to the West Country. We need to focus not on what Worcestre did, on the detailed descriptions of buildings and roads and notable institutions across southern England, but on those sections of his notes about the city of Bristol, and especially on the more unusual sort of note within the bulk of data. We need to keep that vast amount of monotonous detail in mind, as a sort of white ground against which to see Worcestre’s vestigial self, a self that did not mean to come out perhaps. He wrote a lot but rarely says ‘I’. His turn and return to

⁵² *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, part 2, ed. N. DAVIS (Oxford, 1976), p. 211 (1460 probably).

⁵³ Cf. N. ORME, “Worcester, William (1415-1480×85)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004); online edition, Oct 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29967>, accessed 1 June 2010.

⁵⁴ Cf. William Worcestre, *Itineraries*, ed. J. HARVEY (Oxford, 1969), pp. xvii-xviii.

Bristol was, however, a homecoming marked by detailed attention rather than by emotional or expressive language.

It is an extraordinary record because it notes by date the actual actions of its author. We can place his body in time. It is difficult to resist juxtaposing his measured pace to Thomas Hoccleve's perverted gait while he was unwell. Twenty-one inch step by twenty-one inch step, Worcestre measured Bristol in 1480, constructing a series of numerical and verbal maps through his body's action. I have written elsewhere that "the self is a highly localised form of awareness".⁵⁵ More often than is the norm, we can precisely locate Worcestre's awareness. And on a variety of occasions we can see the routine listing of places and features, shaded by the very rare personal or narrative anomaly.

Here is his first 'I' statement:

At Newgate, where [was] formerly the grammar school of Master Robert Lond, head teacher Leland, master of grammatical studies at Oxford, said to have been the flower of grammarians and poets in times long gone by. And he [Leland] died at the times that I first went to Oxford University to study, in Easter term in the year of Christ 1432, when a general eclipse occurred on St Botulph's day.⁵⁶

His dating may be wrong. He may have compressed the year he went to Oxford and the year of the scholar's death, but this note was quite personal. It was his school, his schoolmaster, and this Master Lond had possibly been Leland's teacher and the reason for Worcester's going to University at all. Worcester's father was a saddler and there would not have been any certain expectation.

Again, within a section about forty-five pages later, entitled "*de cellariis, etc.*", "about cellars, etc.", we find a reckoning of the cellars on three streets, but only one personal name, in the quotation "Also, going on the west side of the said road past the house of Master William Botoner and the Guildhall building and the chapel of St George, there are 15 cellars".⁵⁷ William Worcester's mother's name was Botoner and indeed he was sufficiently proud or cognisant of her family that he often enough used her name as his last name, including when he wrote letters. This Master William Botoner was his uncle and it was a spot that, as we are with him standing there, we can tell mattered more. Memory comes into this plainly. For him there was the physical reiteration of the past through the still present. It almost seems an act of affection, then,

⁵⁵ SHAW, *Necessary Conjunctions*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ William Worcester, *Topography of Medieval Bristol*, ed. F. NEALE (Bristol, 2000), pp. 28-29.

⁵⁷ Worcester, *Topography of Bristol*, pp. 64-65.

when a later note shows he lingered to pace out his uncle's house, just as he did more 'important' sites.⁵⁸ It was fifteen steps long.

As he nonchalantly describes Marshall Street later, he mentions it going "past the house of my father W. Worcestre". As he proceeds through Bristol, he will use his own family's properties – his own three gardens are key points of reference – even though they are no such thing for the cartographer.⁵⁹ His sister's house is a landmark too. She was still living there; others are sites of memorial or historical significance for him.

His education and family retain the significance at least of nostalgia, but there may be more feeling, dappling the map of Bristol's streets. He provides a couple of slightly longer than typical notes that resonate along an axis of perception and interest, building up towards feeling or emotion by their tearing his usual borders. Perception and interest are the key features of the human self – if not of self-awareness. Worcestre collected some stories in Bristol and they were stories of travel. I suggest that he had by education, by association with Sir John Fastolf and the wars, by association with many travellers over the years, developed a taste for adventure and travellers. He had a social self and a mind for the distant view as well as the stones directly beneath his feet. He only told stories of the sea: the death of two relatives on the same day in two different vessels, told to him by his godmother; the death of nearly forty Bristol pilgrims, led by a worthy merchant; and a tale of the Bristol attempt to find the "island of Brasylle to the west of Ireland"⁶⁰ in 1480.

Again, we learn from the anomalous moment: Worcestre rarely cites women as sources in his notebooks, but once at least he does and it concerns family:

It was told me by Elizabeth Nicholl [in 1465], that Elizabeth Nicholl my god-mother died on the Feast of Epiphany 35 years before, to wit, when Leycestre was mayor of London.

And in the said year, namely in the year of Christ 14[30], to wit on All Souls' Day, William Nicholl, and —— the husband of Elizabeth his wife, sailed out of the Kingroad in two ships, the one in a fishing boat called the *Cog Anne*, and the other, to wit Elizabeth's husband, in the ship of Thomas Erle; and they both perished on

⁵⁸ Worcestre, *Topography of Bristol*, pp. 120-121.

⁵⁹ Worcestre, *Topography of Bristol*, pp. 105-107.

⁶⁰ Worcestre, *Topography of Bristol*, p. 235.

St Katherine's Eve next following (work out the day of their death) to wit, the Cog Anne sunk, and the other ship was captured by Spaniards.⁶¹

This family story is not his only story of sea adventure that seems too poignant to be just routine antiquarian work. Bristol itself was a zone of significance for him. So, he told another story of sea loss: one that quite exceeded his family tale. This is the story of Robert Sturmy, a prominent merchant and mayor of Bristol, whose tale Worcester tells at least twice and whose house he also notes, signs of a special interest. It was a thirty-year old story and there is every reason to suppose he knew the people directly involved at no more than one remove. In July 1446, Robert Sturmy began his voyage with about 160 pilgrims from the port of Bristol to Jerusalem the Holy. They went by way of Seville and Jaffa, successfully getting to Jerusalem. But on 23 December, while returning towards England, near Modon (Methoni) on the Peloponnesus they got into trouble in their ship, called again the *Cog Anne*. They were "caught unexpectedly off guard by a sudden tempest and strong wind springing up in the black and murky night". This is very unusual and elevated language for Worcester's notebooks, but this was of course an image he conjured rather than witnessed – conjured up, I suspect, often. Thirty-seven men and mariners were lost, pilgrims included, all lost "to the great sorrow of their friends at Bristol and of their wives".⁶² The pain was plainly enduring; it compressed into a couple of lines the venturesomeness and vulnerability of the traveller, lost far from home. The story ends with the relief of knowing that the local bishop honoured the dead with a proper burial and a commemorative chapel. It was all far away, but there was a link to Bristol and therefore to William Worcester, to those who had wandered from home, always meaning to return.⁶³

The Robert Sturmy story has a touch of nostalgia and it is classically medieval, merging the merchant and the pilgrim, but it is no surprise that a sixty-plus-year-old homecoming traveller would express himself through taking such a story on. Perhaps more forward looking was another note William makes of a Bristol voyage. This was in 1480; and was another July sailing from the Kingroad of Bristol; Lloyd "the most knowledgeable mariner in all England" guided it, a fact that we can suppose Worcester knew first hand. The eighty-ton ship was away many months and was driven back by storms to an Irish port. It

⁶¹ Worcester, *Topography of Bristol*, p. 255.

⁶² This is Worcester's version, but see *Robert Sturmy's Commercial Expedition to the Mediterranean (1457/8)*, ed. S. JENKS (Bristol, 2006: *Bristol Record Society* 58).

⁶³ Worcester, *Topography of Bristol*, pp.142-145 (1446).

had failed in its quest to find the “island of Brasyll to the west of Ireland”.⁶⁴ Here without doubt was a road Worcester was eager to have explored and in that he was like many of the period, we must think, but his curiosity about the next phase of a trip seems to come very close to what mattered for him, and we can see a sort of man of the road, conservative but with a touch of the Renaissance in him, keen to learn new things, especially those yet undiscovered, but without the trace of Petrarch.

I am coming quite close to suggesting that the things of Bristol, including its adventures, operate for Worcester as something like T.S. Eliot’s objective correlatives, things associated with emotions, in this case, emotions themselves hidden by the lack of individualistic expressivism.⁶⁵ These things seem personal, possibly psychically potent, with soft social implications for status identity, that is, associations with his family and with his native city, but also with travellers, with seafaring generally. With this in mind, we can turn finally to the most striking objects with which Worcestre’s self was fascinated and involved: trees. Worcestre mentions three trees in his Bristol notebooks. One is an ancient and massive timber found deep in the ground, part apparently of an archaeological site stumbled on by construction workers; the second was a tree in history, i.e. a story of what must have been a great tree, and lastly Worcestre mentions a mulberry tree, just as a way post again, but it was close to his own houses, those that he owned and inherited from his family: “as far as the angle of the corner going into St James’s priory, by a mulberry tree” (“*per unum Mulbertytre*”), measures 191 steps. Another entry follows that also notes this same mulberry tree. It is otherwise unattested historically. It was a marker of William Worcestre’s own self, not clearly a social self either, but one more personal even as it was a public thing. Trees erupting into the maze of steps and streets and churches. A giant tree, a historical tree, his tree that is almost a family tree. Two trees he heard of and one that he knew, perhaps knew since he was young, somehow his tree.

Conclusion

We started our assessment of the changing social self by examining how clothing marked and channelled individual social expression, and we end with

⁶⁴ Worcestre, *Topography of Bristol*, p. 235.

⁶⁵ TAYLOR, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 368-390.

the unlikely object of the mulberry tree as a marker of an inner man and a man's self as constituted through his own memory and perception, communicated in language to unknown possible readers. Unlike the adventure narratives Worcestre outlined a little, the simplicity of the tree rather challenges our interpretive abilities. But that is the point: there is more than enough reason to believe in William Worcestre's right, as it were, to as full a self and as much individuality as Margery Kempe or Thomas Hoccleve. Moreover, men like him, travelling servants or men like his father, a fancy saddler in Bristol, also deserve equal consideration if we are to understand the full range of agency and social reality in the later medieval period. As Susan Crane has put it, "I do mean to counter a persistent impression among post medieval scholars that, insofar as medieval people did not highly value their interiority, they were quite simple creatures compared to us".⁶⁶ What Worcestre may show is how the individual made choices, followed feelings, to make social and cultural connections that yielded a personal identity. Even in the fifteenth century it appears a matter of elective affinities as much as social expectations. This would all be lost without attention to the individual actor. Even when the social content might appear thin, the historical importance of such psychic content is large because it tells us what it was like to be a historical human being.

Given this, however, in Worcestre and Hoccleve, as in the people causing the social legislation about consumption and encouraging the shrewd eye of the butler, we see the pressure coming from individual people to place themselves into the social world in ways that seem unpredictable sometimes, but always personal. The tendency in the fifteenth century certainly seems to be more alive to interiority, to be sure, but even more it is to fashion and place the self into the social world in distinctive ways that were not simply a matter of slotting into or acting out settled categories. Depending on what we thought had occurred in the eleventh or twelfth century, this might well support the views of Luhmann that a transition to the modern mode was underway. It would seem, however, that this might have taken place a little earlier than he supposed.

Methodologically, we need more than social history or its tools. The interest or ability to reveal people as expressive individuals requires a shift in perspective. One needs obviously to spend enough time with the texts to see what the norm is, but you also have to use an optimistic hermeneutic, by which one's historical object is assumed to be a person to be understood pretty much as you

⁶⁶ S. CRANE, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia, PA, 2002), p. 76.

would try to understand any other person. Luhmann's theory does in fact allow this much. There are other useful ways to read these texts, but when we seek the psychic individual, we seem already to have accepted, on whatever grounds, a principle akin to empathy, which philosophers such as Karsten Stueber have been exploring. This commits us at least as far as something like Donald Davidson's principle of interpretive charity.⁶⁷ This is the presumption that we can make sense of people (in the past), as we would try to understand someone with whom we shared no common language, still assuming that they were trying to make sense of the world around them, a world familiar to us as well.

Given that, we might see self and individuality even in the difficult journals of William Worcestre. After all, understanding a fragmentary past person or type of person is not really so different from understanding present people, whose supposed inner worlds are by and large assumed, just like their intentions, manifested by their actions and words. Individuality is the unique weighing and processing of the world; experience of this is but one feature; self-expression one possible mode of manifesting that individuality, but it is the one distinguished by its utility to historians.

This end point brings us to the fact that Hoccleve and Worcestre were indeed uniquely expressive individuals. Worcestre's associations were akin to many medieval social groupings, urban, regional, familial, but there was a catch. Most of his people were dead; and his community was a city in which he did not live and had not done for many decades. Moreover, the associations were dreams, were history, were pieties and fantasies, even of the future. This might mean many things, but at least it suggests that some very important historical material can be generated from the dynamic and psychic self that is historically fascinating, even if it runs against or outside the grain of a useful social or sociological analysis. The later Middle Ages may have had increasing cultural resources by which to see the different types of people there were; the challenge for us now is to improve our own skills of historical perception of this sly later medieval self.

In doing that, we can launch from hypotheses such as used by Niklas Luhmann or those of other sociologists. As we have seen, both as reflected in legis-

⁶⁷ E.g. K. STUEBER, *Rediscovering Empathy: Agency, Folk Psychology, and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, MA, 2006); D. DAVIDSON, "The coherence theory of truth and knowledge", in: ID., *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 137-157, at pp. 148-149, is the most succinct statement.

lation and in direct verbal self-expression, fifteenth-century England suggests that individuals struggled to place themselves into the world in sometimes novel, certainly self-reflective ways. These could cause personal strife and emotional pain, as they did for Margery Kempe or Thomas Hoccleve, but the self could express its desires and associations more comfortably as well. The sumptuary legislation demonstrated that claims for a particular sort of recognition might be resisted, but the labelling and distinguishing of individuals was not just a matter of restricting them to well-established categories and associations. New things were under way; new categories created; social differentiation under the strain of pressing selves and thoughtful societies was taking place. Imagination was re-calibrating identity.

It may well be that the drive towards new forms of society was truly underway. Whether this means that the Middle Ages were over or merely that we have misunderstood them till now is a question that we must defer, but we can insist at least on the power of the person in communicative tension with other individuals and meanings. This created a very fluid social world and an even more diverse world of individuals.⁶⁸ In the end, we must also defer the other tantalising question: how modern was the fifteenth century anyway?

⁶⁸ A good place to start is P. COSS, "Knights, esquires and the origins of social gradation in England", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 5 (1995), pp. 155-178.

‘Individuality’, Relationships, Words about Oneself: Autobiographical Writing as a Resource (Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries) – Konrad Pellikan’s Autobiography*

GABRIELE JANCKE

Individuality is a notion that has had a prominent role in research on autobiography and self-narratives. Yet, is individuality an equally relevant category for autobiographical texts?

Research on autobiographies and self-narratives and, on the other hand, autobiographical writings are seen here as two different entities, standing in a certain confrontation to each other, especially in respect of individuality. What autobiography studies do with autobiographical texts and what scholars expect

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Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 151-175.

from these sources, is one thing; what the writers themselves were out for and what they actually did by writing such texts, is another altogether. At least, both are different from each other. Furthermore, it makes a considerable difference if scholars manage to relate autobiographical writings to their own questions and established categories, e.g. individuality, or if autobiographical texts themselves are inspired by an interest in the same or some other topic and scholars take care to become aware of these – which would require them to suspend their own questions for the time being, in order to first establish the text-organising principles. This does not mean that we should not ask questions or apply our own topics and categories to texts from the past (which we do anyway). It only means we should be aware of the difference.

In the first part the following essay deals with this difference and with the resulting irritations, and furthermore with some ideas concerning the reasons for this irritating difference. In the second part, some observations on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources will be presented focussing on what these texts have to say in self-description about the person of the writer. In the third and last part I am going to discuss if and how the term ‘individuality’, understood as a set of questions directed at concepts of the person, can be connected with these findings, especially in light of debates on an in- and exclusionary individual. The focus here is on how to bring historical material and modern – or postmodern – theory into dialogue.¹

¹ This essay is not intended to give an introduction to the wealth of studies that have been done on individuality and the individual. For some closely related questions, cf. G. JANCKE, “Patronagebeziehungen in autobiographischen Schriften des 16. Jahrhunderts – Individualisierungsweisen?”, in: *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit: Individualisierungsweisen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, ed. K. VON GREYERZ, assisted by E. MÜLLER-LUCKNER (Munich, 2007: *Schriften des Historischen Kollegs* 68), pp. 13-31; G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH, “Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung”, in: *Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung*, ed. G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH (Göttingen, 2005: *Querelles: Jahrbuch für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* 10), pp. 7-27; English version: “From the individual to the person: Challenging autobiography theory”, in: *Mapping the ‘I’: Research on Self-Narratives in Germany and Switzerland*, ed. C. ULBRICH et al. (Leiden, 2015: *Egodocuments and History Series* 8), pp. 15-33; G. JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2002: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 10).

Research on Autobiographies and Self-Narratives

Scholars of history as well as of literature have been studying autobiographical texts while frequently drawing on the category of 'individuality', seeing it as an important and even an absolutely decisive notion. That both scholarly disciplines made the same choice is not obvious in the first case, taking into account that it is a non-textual category, related to some reality situated outside texts and also, in this case, rooted in a person's life, i.e. on a micro-level of history. Even when taking this step at all, thus leaving aside textual categories from the outset, it is striking that autobiographical texts in this approach are not related to all elements which might be encountered in a person's life story put into writing. Instead, only a certain part is taken into account. Given the variety of topics which are described at length in autobiographical texts – such as the body, social relations, material objects, resources of various types, actions and ritualised ways of behaviour, communications of various forms and contents – why should scholars feel inclined to make individuality, of all things, the topic of their studies? Why not food? Why not clothes? Why not relationships?

Regardless of which meanings may be ascribed to 'individuality', in comparison with those concrete matters they are certainly to be located on a meta-level. This meta-level is concerned with discrete persons and in particular with the attempt to signify something which is supposed to characterise and to organise persons and which thus distinguishes them from others. At the same time, this perspective makes them comparable to other persons, by conceiving a person as a basic unit standing beside others and on the same level. An aspect like self- and hetero-reference, requiring demarcation and wholeness as constitutive elements, makes sense only in relation to units complete by themselves and basically of the same type, coexisting on the same level in a non-hierarchical way. As a consequence, the notion of individuality belongs to the broad field of questions concerning the category of the person. In particular, it can be identified as a highly specific concept of the person, or rather it covers only certain parts of a concept of the person.

Together with the basic assumptions as spelled out above, this category determines the answers we can get to our questions and even determines the questions we are induced to ask or not to ask, independent of what the sources may say and equally independent of what may be the reference outside the texts (if there is such a reference at all). Everything that does not coincide with

the person seen as an inner-directed, autopoietic, and self-centred system tends to be dismissed as irrelevant or even to be rendered invisible. This also happens in Cornelia Bohn's systems theory-guided discussion of individual and person. 'Person' is for her only a bundle of markers comprehending bodily and social aspects and – in her reasoning: therefore – concerned only with parts that are not relevant. The 'individual', however elusive as well as historically and socially particular she describes it to be, is declared to be the concept that has to be studied in its historical development, thus offering the standard against which to measure any "concept of person".²

At the same time, the question arises of which social and historical context has to be envisaged for the person: it is the question of where and how to play a role as a basic unit with her or his individuality. This question aims at the concept of society and also at the cosmic and religious worldview related to the notion of individuality. It is only within the contextual framework of a particular historical society that scholars will be able to explore which roles for particular persons and their respective individualities were deemed to be available, to make sense, to be desirable, and last but not least to be worthwhile to enforce – and which were not.³ In addition, only within such a specific context will it be possible to find out for historical societies if individuality was seen as a desirable aim in itself (which we often assume to have been the case), and for whom and in which respects this was true, or if individuality was perceived rather as some raw state which had to be worked upon and to be refined, seen in any case as in need of being processed towards another, desirable and normative state. We can even go beyond the problem of positive or negative evaluation and ask if individuality was an imaginable category at all.

From research on individuality, e.g. studies by Eva Schlotheuber and Dieter Kartschoke⁴, we know that the estate-based societies of the Middle Ages

² C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), and especially EAD., "Individuen und Personen", in: EAD., *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 49-70: Bohn attempts a description of the genesis of the autonomous individual in history, thus using a single notion of the person for historically different types of society; cf. also N. LUHMANN, "The individuality of the individual: Historical meanings and contemporary problems", in: *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T.C. HELLER *et al.* (Stanford, 1986), pp. 313-325, 351-354.

³ Cf. M.B. BEDOS-REZAK, in this volume.

⁴ E. SCHLOTHEUBER, "Norm und Innerlichkeit: Zur problematischen Suche nach den Anfängen der Individualität", *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004), pp. 329-357; D. KARTSCHOKE, "Ich-Darstellung in der volkssprachigen Literatur", in: *Entdeckung des Ich: Die Geschichte der Individualisierung vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. R. VAN DÜLMEN

and early modern times favoured *ordo* and a life according to *ordo*. In the context of such estate-oriented secular and religious orders individuality might be seen as a point of departure, but certainly not as an orientation or even an aim in itself. This would be true mainly for normative orientations and values. But historical agents – male and female – and their ways of living their lives in material, physical, and social terms should also not be forgotten in this context. Only when looking at historical agents as well as at their actual practices and visions of life can we find out about the role individuality may have had in reality, below normative and theoretical meta-levels. As Caroline Walker Bynum and Natalie Zemon Davis have demonstrated, individuality seems to have been conceived throughout in the context of group cultures. Consequently, not the boundaries of the individual but those of the relevant groups were perceived as the demarcations between inner and outer worlds that really mattered. The groups which were of significance for medieval and early modern people were religious communities on the one hand, and on the other hand families and kinship networks, relationships of friendship and patronage, as well as scholars' and other group cultures.⁵

Persons, as these studies show, need not be seen as closed entities and completely self-organised systems, surrounded by a clear-cut boundary, first and foremost self-related and self-concerned, finding their moving and organising forces entirely inside themselves. Recently, much research has been done on these questions. Historically, persons in medieval societies and throughout the early modern period were seen as beings with osmotic boundaries, moved also by outward forces like God, demons, spirits, via dreams or fear or imaginations, hierarchically positioned on different levels, dependent on each other socially and factually, and also according to theoretical concepts of society and polity as a living organism – to give just a few very short impressions from early modern history.⁶

(Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2001), pp. 61-78; cf. also A. GEROK-REITER, *Individualität: Studien zu einem umstrittenen Phänomen mittelhochdeutscher Epik* (Tübingen and Basel, 2006: *Bibliotheca Germanica* 51); L'individu au Moyen Âge: Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité, ed. B.M. BEDOS-REZAK and D. IOGNA-PRAT (Paris, 2005).

⁵ C.W. BYNUM, "Did the twelfth century discover the individual?", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980), pp. 1-17; improved version in: EAD., *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley etc., 1982), pp. 82-109; N.Z. DAVIS, "Boundaries and the sense of self in sixteenth-century France", in: *Reconstructing Individualism*, pp. 53-63, 332-335; for group cultures cf. JANCKE, *Autobiographie*.

⁶ B. DUDEN, *Geschichte unter der Haut: Ein Eisenacher Arzt und seine Patientinnen um 1730* (Stuttgart, 1987); J.J. MARTIN, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke and New

These findings strongly suggest three points. First, that it makes much sense to talk, as systems theory and sociology generally do, about individual persons in terms of social contexts and of the specific structures of the respective societies. Secondly, it is equally consistent with research on medieval and early modern societies that systems theory would distinguish between different historical societies and, consequently, between inclusionary and exclusionary concepts of the person, dependent on the respective societies and their structures and mechanisms. Thirdly, to define a person in terms of inclusion and belonging means, as especially Bynum and Davis have shown, touching on the decisive question of how and where to draw boundaries. Social structures and mechanisms, therefore, are much more than just an outside frame for the same type of individual – put into different contexts but conceptually remaining the same – i.e. the modern exclusionary individual with its individuality and clear-cut boundaries. Medieval and early modern societies with their notions of group-oriented persons strongly suggest that the notion of the modern, individuality-oriented individual cannot be just inserted into different ‘outside’ orientations and retained ‘in itself’ as a self-oriented entity, as systems theory would have it. Instead, the notion of an individuality-oriented individual has turned out to be descriptively inapplicable, thus not providing an adequate analytical tool for analysing inclusionary and hierarchical concepts of the person. This state of things would require scholars to rethink their notions of a person completely, at least when dealing with pre-modern societies.

Individuality is a basic notion of different scholarly disciplines, history among them, and is often supposed to be an unquestionable category that is not in need of explanation. This ‘apparent obviousness’, however, involves the problem that several normative and theoretical assumptions may be implied which are related to larger contexts, reaching far beyond the individual person as an analytical category. In my view, one such assumption is the idea that it is the individual person that has to be seen (a) as a decisive basic unit and that it is (b) the person’s status-independent equality with others that makes this entity so crucial, raising it (c) to the importance of a standard normative category that is seen as generally valid even in the various contexts of any concept of world and society.

York, 2004); A. BÄHR, “Träumen von sich: Imaginative Selbstverortung und der Raum der ‘Person’ in Traumerzählungen der Frühen Neuzeit”, in: *Räume des Selbst: Selbstzeugnisse transkulturell*, ed. A. BÄHR et al. (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2007: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 19), pp. 273-287; ID., “Furcht, divinatorischer Traum und autobiographisches Schreiben in der Frühen Neuzeit”, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 34 (2007), pp. 1-32.

Basic social units and their significance in contexts of diverse historical societies are indeed highly important matters – too important for associating them with implicit, quasi-automatic, and generalising assumptions. On the other hand, it would be highly productive to treat them as objects of explicit questions and of research procedures with open-ended results. Because of these considerations, 'concept of the person' has been suggested as the term that can enable scholars to deal with the person as an analytical category, a category that is in need of theoretical reflexion as well as of empirical and especially historical research.⁷ This is no new idea as such, as it has a history going back to Marcel Mauss, sociologist and anthropologist, who in 1938 first postulated the person as a category that is concerned with basic units of society as well as with a rich cross-cultural and historical diversity.⁸ Whereas Mauss has been widely discussed in his ideas on the gift, his equally groundbreaking essay on the category of the person has received far less attention.⁹

While Mauss held the person to be a category as fundamental as other Aristotelian categories, at the same time he also tried to put the variety of the relevant phenomena known to him into some sort of order. In doing so, he imposed the scheme of a progressive historical development on his material, leading up to modern European notions of the individual as the highest stage. And it is here that his own methodology is far from exemplary: even contemporary societies, if classified by him as 'primitive', are seen as early stages of

⁷ JANCKE and ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person".

⁸ M. MAUSS, "Une catégorie de l'esprit humain: La notion de personne, celle de 'moi'", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 68 (1938), pp. 263-281; English trans.: "A category of the human mind: The notion of person; the notion of self", in: *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. M. CARRITHERS *et al.* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1-25, reprinted in: *Identity: A Reader*, ed. P. DU GAY *et al.* (London etc., 2000), pp. 325-345.

⁹ *The Category of the Person*; cf. also S. MOEBIUS, *Marcel Mauss* (Konstanz, 2006: *Klassiker der Wissenssoziologie* 2), pp. 61, 65, 68, 92, 104, 105 f., 123, 127, 131. Politically, Mauss was a socialist who considered a certain measure of individualism and liberality to be necessary (MOEBIUS, *Marcel Mauss*, p. 123), and as one of the followers of Durkheim's sociology he also would have been aware long before his essay on the person that his uncle Durkheim had already introduced the idea of the person into his sociological theory, cf. R. LAUNAY, "Idea of the person – Durkheim's critique" (2010), <http://science.jrank.org/pages/10631/Person-Idea-Durkheim-s-Critique.html> (last seen: 6. 05. 2010); see also ID., "Idea of the person – Mauss: The person as "a category of the human mind" (2010), <http://science.jrank.org/pages/10632/Person-Idea-Mauss-Person-Category-Human-Mind.html> (last seen: 6.05. 2010); ID., "Idea of the person – The anthropology of the person since Mauss" (2010), <http://science.jrank.org/pages/10633/Person-Idea-Anthropology-Person-since-Mauss.html> (last seen: 6.05.2010); see further M. CARRITHERS, "Person", in: *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. A. BARNARD and J. SPENCER (London and New York, 1996), pp. 419-423.

historical development no longer relevant in contemporary contexts¹⁰, while the actual lack of respect for the individual, the barbarities and atrocities committed just across the frontiers of his own country are not explicitly counted as challenging the high developmental stage he accords to European societies in general.

In his use of history as a developmental and progressive scheme for classifying empirical data, Mauss certainly took highly problematic steps in order to make his idea plausible, and my remarks do not imply that we should follow him there. On the other hand, he presents a whole range of aspects regarding the person when discussing his material. Those aspects, when detached from Mauss's developmental historical scheme, can be turned into questions to be asked of any material, without already having fixed results in mind. In this way they can be useful as a starting point for asking questions, along with his idea that the person is not a cultural and historical constant but a variable, and therefore should be seen as an analytical category.

Mauss stressed that he wanted to inquire about notions of the person as a subject of social history, touching at the same time on law and morality. He related the various forms the respective concepts of person took in different societies to their systems of law, religion, customs, social structures, and mentality. He was also aware that in a large number of languages the relationships between a speaker and the object he / she was speaking about would be expressed in such a way that the 'self' is indeed present, but not in the form of a separate entity, independent of relationships in time and space.¹¹ Mauss is concerned with naming and ritual practices as indicators of belonging to some social group,¹² with life stages,¹³ with roles played in dramas and families,¹⁴ with the 'self' as a composite or even illusory thing;¹⁵ he finds that in some societies it is just for certain people to have the chance to become a 'persona',

¹⁰ This notion of contemporary societies which are classified as 'primitive' or 'backward', and as a consequence are no longer seen as full participants in contemporary situations, is criticised by M. TODOROVA, "The trap of backwardness: Modernity, temporality, and the study of eastern European nationalism", *Slavic Review* 64 (2005), pp. 140-164, and J. FABIAN, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, with a new foreword by M. BUNZL (New York, 1983).

¹¹ Mauss' essay is quoted in the English translation as printed in *The Category of the Person*, here: p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 4 ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13 f.

e.g. in Roman society for citizens and freemen, i.e. males of a certain status, and that this was combined with political and religious agency,¹⁶ that persons may be codified as legal, religious, or moral entities, and that these in their turn are made possible or even demanded and enforced by law and those in positions of power.¹⁷ He connects notions of the person to practices as well as to more theoretical and normative concepts – thus offering a wide range of aspects which scholars may make use of for exploring concepts of the person in depth, always in connection with power relations and with social structures.

Enough about scholarly notions of individuality and the person, soon leading into highly complex theoretical debates. But what happens when the term 'individuality' is actually deployed in scholarly contexts? Strangely, Marcel Mauss's essay and the whole line of research on concepts of the person in diverse disciplines have been largely ignored by scholars of individuality, obviously supposing the latter to be an established and separate field of inquiry, not in need of being connected to research concerning the person. With a view to autobiography and self-narrative studies, 'individuality' seems to be a given, not in need of being explained, but serving as some self-evident key to autobiographical writings generally.¹⁸ The equation of the three notions 'person' – 'autobiographical writings' – 'individuality' is so regularly assumed to be a fact that it seems worthwhile to have a closer look at the association that is implied. In this approach, individuality is often tailored towards emotionality, spontaneity, and authenticity, and it seems to give access to the 'I' or 'self' as the inner core of a person. Boundaries between 'inner' and 'outer', private and public are taken for granted. The 'inner' and the 'private' are seen as privileged and as representing the essential part, whereas the 'outer' and the 'public' are supposed to be additional and seem rather in the way when seeking access to the 'interior' values. At this point, it becomes obvious that such a use of the term 'individuality' belongs to some larger system of thought which is concerned with concepts of the person and of society,¹⁹ but at the same time is

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18f.

¹⁸ E.g. M.A. DANAHAY, "Individualism and life writing", in: *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*, ed. M. JOLLY, 2 vols. (London and Chicago, 2001), pp. 466 f., at p. 466; O. ULBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung: Individualität in Autobiographien", in *Entdeckung des Ich*, pp. 109-144; *Entdeckung des Ich* and review by G. JANCKE in *L'Homme: Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 13.2 (2002), pp. 297-300; H.R. VELTEN, *Das selbst geschriebene Leben: Eine Studie zur deutschen Autobiographie im 16. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg, 1995: *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik* 29).

¹⁹ This also applies to Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', firmly situated in the public sphere

connected also to specific concepts of space and place. Recent studies on ‘spaces of the self’ are seminal for understanding this in detail.²⁰

It is well-known that at least from Jacob Burckhardt onwards scholars have assumed a close connection between autobiographical writing and individuality.²¹ By now, we have become aware of the fact that individuality is just one among several different concepts of person and that autobiographical texts also give evidence of a larger variety of concepts of the person.²² This is especially the case when admitting not only ‘autobiographies’ in a strict sense, that is, texts which are particularly close to the concept of the autonomous individual, related primarily to him- or herself in self-reflection. After considerably widening the range of texts to be taken into account as autobiographical writings, foremost in self-narrative studies of the early modern period, the importance of social relations in autobiographical self-descriptions is emerging as well as the fact that relationships are not necessarily in contradiction to processes of individualisation.²³

Space and spatiality have found almost no explicit attention from scholars in self-narrative and autobiography studies. This does not indicate any spatial abstinence, however. Thus, the person described in autobiographical texts is assumed to have an inner space as a matter of course, and this is contrasted with an outer space, both seen as being separated by a clear boundary. The

of the social forces, where it is largely out of reach of individual persons. By separating individual agents from the sphere of social forces and structures, thus at first sight assuming either the lack or the irrelevance of some sphere of the individual, Bourdieu at the same time implicitly opens up the possibility of the existence of some sphere of self-determination and un-estranged life at the horizon instead of solving the question conceptually. Thanks to Sebastian Kühn for this point.

²⁰ *Räume des Selbst; Mapping the Self: Space, Identity, Discourse in British Auto/Biography*, ed. F. REGARD (Saint-Étienne, 2003). The following passages on spatial aspects of the ‘individual’ rely on A. BÄHR *et al.*, “Räume des Selbst: Eine Einleitung”, in: *Räume des Selbst*, pp. 1-12, esp. pp. 1-5.

²¹ Critical: DAVIS, “Boundaries and a sense of self”; JANCKE, *Autobiographie*, pp. 2-10, 27 ff.; JANCKE and ULBRICH, “Vom Individuum zur Person”.

²² JANCKE and ULBRICH, “Vom Individuum zur Person”.

²³ *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit: Individualisierungsweisen*, esp. JANCKE, “Patronagebeziehungen”; cf. also R. RIES, “Individualisierung im Spannungsfeld differenter Kulturen: Positionsbestimmungen und experimentelle Neudefinitionen in der jüdischen Minderheit”, in: *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit: Individualisierungsweisen*, pp. 79-112. Important studies on medieval and humanist autobiographic writing are: S. SCHMOLINSKY, *Sich schreiben in der Welt des Mittelalters: Begriffe und Konturen einer mediävistischen Selbstzeugnisforschung* (Bochum, 2012: *Selbstzeugnisse des Mittelalters und der beginnenden Neuzeit* 4) and K.A.E. ENENKEL, *Die Erfindung des Menschen: Die Autobiographik des frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin and New York, 2008).

problem here is again that these assumptions are treated as facts which can be taken for granted from the outset, and that therefore no questions arise as to how the notion of an 'inside' and 'outside' of the person would become evident in an autobiographical text. In such cases, the 'self' of an autobiographical text is made to follow some concept of the person that is upheld by self-narrative and autobiography studies, bearing the stamp of scholarly assumptions belonging to an influential tradition but not perceptibly supported by textual evidence.

Moreover, the person of self-narrative studies is usually situated in private spaces and thus related to a separation of public and private spheres.²⁴ It is primarily the personal and the 'private' which seem to be relevant for autobiographical writing. As a consequence, 'public' topics either do not appear to be suitable for autobiographical writing or are even excluded from the range of relevant texts via the definition of literary genre. Thus, the distinction between 'autobiography' ('private') and 'memoirs' ('public') is a common scholarly operation in literary studies.²⁵ This spatial dichotomy of private and public as well as that of the person's interior vs. exterior draws on a notion of inner and outer space insofar as 'private' is seen as the inner part of domestic life and the interior of the personal life is understood to be the essential part of what is going on in this sphere. The problem here again is that this assumption is treated as a well-established fact but never made the object of questions exploring the spatial dimensions of persons and of autobiographical writings. These implicit notions draw on a specific concept of society and in particular on its characteristic structures of public and private. The private is postulated as a separate, autonomous sphere, and the individual is situated here, thus also encoding a specific concept of the person in the notion of a separate private sphere.

This analytic model of separate spheres with its implied gender-, race-, and class-specific structures is then also turned into a model of global evaluation,

²⁴ Cf. M. FOISIL, "Die Sprache der Dokumente und die Wahrnehmung des privaten Lebens", in: *Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, 3, *Von der Renaissance zur Aufklärung*, ed. Ph. ARIÈS and R. CHARTIER (Frankfurt am Main, 1991; first French edn. 1986), pp. 333-369, at pp. 333-338; VELTEN, *Das selbst geschriebene Leben*; website *Les écrits du for privé*, ed. J.-P. BARDET and F.-J. RUGGIU (2009), <http://www.ecritsduforprive.fr/> (last seen: 5.05.2010); for a feminist critique see: *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by S. BENSTOCK (Chapel Hill etc., 1988).

²⁵ E.g. B. NEUMANN, *Identität und Rollenzwang: Zur Theorie der Autobiographie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970: *Athenäum Paperbacks Germanistik* 3); M. WAGNER-EGELHAAF, *Autobiographie* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2000), p. 6; M. HOLDENRIED, *Autobiographie* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 32 f.; on memoirs see also FOISIL, "Die Sprache der Dokumente", pp. 334 f.

according to which the existence of a private sphere and an individual centred in this sphere are indicators for the level of development of a certain society. This supports assumptions that such forms of autobiographical writing constitute a special characteristic of Europe or the Western world. By this idea again spatial spheres are postulated consisting of an inner (Western) core, containing the best and essential part, and of an exterior, less substantial, enveloping part of the world.

Thus, self-narrative studies and those studies of the self which preferably make use of autobiographical writings²⁶ are based on spatial assumptions which remain implicit and therefore outside the range of conscious intellectual awareness and reflection. From a micro- up to a global macro-level, space is pre-structured and oriented in a thoroughgoing way: At the core there is the interior of the individual, as the centre and destination or as point of departure and point of reference. At some non-specified periphery there is the rest of the world. This concept of the person, obviously, is closely related to notions of a container space,²⁷ as they are common in a structurally analogous way for other concepts as well whenever they are spatially understood, like 'nation' or 'culture'.²⁸ The problematic aspects in respect of the individual would be the assumption of a demarcation between inner and outer, leading to the idea of some characteristic and holistic inner sphere, thus coming at least very close to the notion of autonomous, monadic, separate entities which can be defined against others of the same kind by inner substance. According to this spatial concept, communication and relationships are secondary for the individual, i.e. either

²⁶ The connection between the self and autobiographical writings is of course not compelling. Studies of the self could and even should use a much wider range of sources, as e.g. David Sabeau has argued in his seminal article D.W. SABEAN, "Production of the self during the age of confessionalism", *Central European History* 29 (1996), pp. 1-18.

²⁷ Similar remarks with more background from spatial theory in: M. CRANG and N. THRIFT, "Introduction", in: *Thinking Space*, ed. M. CRANG and N. THRIFT (London and New York, 2000: *Critical Geographies* 9), pp. 1-30, especially the passage on "Spaces of the self and other, interiority and exteriority" (pp. 7-13), with the notion of "centred space of the classical subject" (p. 12); on space and concepts of person cf. also J. MIGGELBRINK, "Die (Un-)Ordnung des Raumes: Bemerkungen zum Wandel geographischer Raumkonzepte im ausgehenden 20. Jahrhundert", in: *Ortsgespräche: Raum und Kommunikation im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. A.C.T. GEP- PERT *et al.* (Bielefeld, 2005: *Zeit – Sinn – Kultur* 3), pp. 79-105, esp. pp. 94 f., 98 f.

²⁸ For a precise analysis of this way of constructing a concept, see A. SCHLOTTMANN, "Rekonstruktion alltäglicher Raumkonstruktionen: Eine Schnittstelle von Sozialgeographie und Geschichtswissenschaft?", in: *Ortsgespräche*, pp. 107-133, at p. 123. Critique of holistic and territorial concepts of culture: C. LUTTER and M. REISENLEITNER, *Cultural Studies: Eine Einführung* (Vienna, 1998: *Cultural Studies* 0), pp. 87, 89, 106 f., 114.

unimportant from the outset or giving cause for (or rise to) uneasy questions about where and to what extent the individual is untouched and unmingled with others and society.

These classical ideas of self-narrative and autobiography studies together result in a spatial concept of concentric circles, at whose periphery the so-called non-Western world is to be found, and in whose centre there is the interior of an autonomous individual, secluded and self-contained in its domestic private sphere. Inside this interior of the individual, then, emotions²⁹ and experiences³⁰ are thought to be situated. Authenticity³¹ seems to offer immediate access to the inner circumstances of the individual or is assumed to represent an undisguised expression of these inner circumstances as a specific achievement of the individual. Thus, authenticity is concerned with opening and closing the boundary between interior and exterior. Autobiographical writings seem to be the window offering a privileged view into the emotional, experiential, authentic interior of the person.

So many tacit assumptions may be found behind an innocent term like 'individuality' that it may carry along quite some invisible baggage (which we might not wish to accept wholesale). In particular, the term may imply several

²⁹ For current research on emotions, cf. C. JARZEBOWSKI, "Gewalt und Erfahrung: Überlegungen zu den Memoiren der Wilhelmine von Bayreuth", in: *Blutige Worte: Zum Verhältnis von Sprache und Gewalt in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. C. JARZEBOWSKI and J. EMING (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 194-221, and EAD., "Loss and emotion: Funeral works on children in early modern Europe and America", in: *Loss in Early Modern History*, ed. L. TATLOCK (Leiden, 2010), pp. 187-212. From these studies it becomes obvious that notions about person, emotions, and space are closely interrelated, and that the problems as outlined here are relevant also for the field of emotions. Thanks to Claudia Jarzebski for pointing this out.

³⁰ Cf. K. VON GREYERZ, "Erfahrung und Konstruktion: Selbstrepräsentation in autobiographischen Texten des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in: *Berichten, Erzählen, Beherrschen: Wahrnehmung und Repräsentation in der frühen Kolonialgeschichte Europas*, ed. S. BURGHARTZ et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 2003: *Zeitsprünge: Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit*), pp. 220-239; S. SCHMOLINSKY, "Selbstzeugnisse finden oder: Zur Überlieferung erinnelter Erfahrung im Mittelalter", in: *Self-Fashioning: Personen(selbst)darstellung in Spätmittelalter und früherer Neuzeit*, ed. R. SUNTRUP and J.R. VEENSTRA (Frankfurt am Main etc., 2001: *Medieval to Early Modern Culture – Kultureller Wandel vom Mittelalter zur frühen Neuzeit* 3), pp. 23-49; J.W. SCOTT, "Phantasie und Erfahrung", *Feministische Studien* 19 (2001), pp. 74-88; EAD., "Experience", in: *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. J. BUTLER and J.W. SCOTT (New York and London, 1992), pp. 22-40.

³¹ Cf. M. BERMAN, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society*, 2nd edn. (London and New York, 2009; first edn. 1970), and D.H. FINKELSTEIN, *Expression and the Inner*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2008; first edn. 2003).

notions which may influence our work even if we took a critical stance toward them. In my opinion, the following points are especially important:

1. ‘Individuality’ may be associated implicitly with a particular concept of the person, which in turn is characterised by terms like the ‘self’ or ‘autonomy’.

2. In this case, ‘individuality’ also implies a specific concept of space, structuring person and society in a comprehensive way, from micro- to macro-level, according to notions of a container space. Spatial structures that are different from this notion, e.g. organised by relationships, networks, or through performative ways of acting,³² can barely be made visible in light of this concept. They would need different analytical tools in order to be accessible for description and analysis.

3. ‘Individuality’ is also part of a historical master narrative of secularisation, rationalisation, and individualisation which deals with removal from authorities, traditions, and social relations, i.e. with getting rid of all kinds of religious and secular ties and obligations. On this score again ‘individuality’ is connected to the autonomous individual.

4. As to texts, the category of ‘individuality’ easily leads us to assume a documentary mode of writing, or to read them predominantly in referential aspects, and thus to consider them foremost in respect of the truth claims of authenticity. Regarding the narrator, it is supposed to be her or his main intention to convey a view into her or his interior, into the essential part of his / her own person, with the greatest possible objectivity, or at least that she or he should pursue this goal in accordance with the rules of the genre. In terms of literary scholarship, ‘individuality’ may imply an aesthetics of objectivity and authenticity, or, in terms of historical scholarship, it may suppose a documentary character of the texts (which becomes manifest by terms like *Selbstzeugnisse*³³ or ‘ego-documents’).

³² For such performative and relational notions of space, cf. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, “Raumkonzeptionen der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt: Zur Verortung von Gericht, Kanzlei und Archiv im Stadtraum”, in: *Städteplanung – Planungsstädte*, ed. B. FRITZSCHE et al. (Zürich, 2006), pp. 101–123, or A. LANDWEHR, *Die Erschaffung Venedigs: Raum, Bevölkerung, Mythos: 1570–1750* (Paderborn etc., 2007).

³³ This is why I use the English term ‘self-narrative’ in this essay, rather than a direct translation of the German term *Selbstzeugnisse*, which is the established term in German language research. In using the English term ‘self-narrative’, I follow the DFG-Research Group ‘Selbstzeugnisse in transkultureller Perspektive – Self-Narratives in Transcultural Perspective’ at the Free University of Berlin; cf. <http://www.fu-berlin.de/dfg-fg/fg530/>.

5. All these concepts have been developed in the second half of the eighteenth century in some particular, mainly Western European, regions. From there, they have been highly influential transculturally and transepoachally. Their particularity with regard to time, place, persons, and texts has come to pass almost unnoticed wherever they are applied today, often in a generalising way.

Words about Oneself: Basic Units, Relationships, and Resources

What has been said so far was meant to consider how 'individuality' would go with autobiographical writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from the German speaking regions, written in German or in Latin, but also in French, Italian, Czech, or in Hebrew. To my mind, the concept and the sources do not fit easily. There is a dissonance to be heard, which I have tried to describe here. It is not the question of 'right' or 'wrong' that I am concerned with, but rather the observation that categories like 'individuality' or 'self-' and 'hetero-reference' direct attention to something which can be found in autobiographical texts of this time only in a highly qualified sense. On the other hand, these categories disregard many aspects which seem to have been of the highest importance for the texts and therefore must have been decisive for the writers in their situations of writing and for their strategies of writing.

The following are some observations concerning basic units of society, relationships, and resources in autobiographical sources of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A very telling example is the autobiography written by Konrad Pellikan (1478-1556), who was a Reformed Hebraist and Professor of Old Testament Studies in Zurich.³⁴ As a very young man he had joined the Franciscan Order in its observant branch, had made a career there, and had been appointed to several leading positions. Among others, he was the Guardian of the friars in Basel. Internally, he supported reformatory tendencies. It was only after these had been completely suppressed by Franciscan superiors that he went to Zurich to become a professor there, thereby actually leaving his

³⁴ For information on Konrad Pellikan and his autobiography cf. G. JANCKE, "Konrad Pellikan", in: EAD., *Selbstzeugnisse im deutschsprachigen Raum (Autobiographien, Tagebücher und andere autobiographische Schriften), 1400-1620: Eine Quellenkunde*, with the assistance of Marc Jarzebowski, Klaus Krönert, and Yvonne Aßmann (13.8.2008), <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/quellenkunde> (last seen: 5. 5. 2010), with further references. An in-depth study of this highly fascinating autobiography is missing.

Order. He wrote his *Chronicon* in the Latin language from 1544 onwards, after his son Samuel had started his studies at university one year before. At the beginning of his autobiography he not only gave a reason for his writing and an instruction on how to read this text, but he also classified the practice of autobiographical writing as an element of a comprehensive doctrine of a good life. In other contexts this would also be called *eudaimonia* in Greek, *shlemut* in Hebrew, or *ars bene vivendi* in Latin, meaning a cultivation of human flourishing and perfection in a wide ethical sense, and going back to religious and secular traditions of Antiquity.³⁵ By writing autobiographical texts, according to Pellikan, each generation was to create spiritual values and to transmit them to the next generation as part of its inheritance. Pellikan writes:³⁶

Konrad Pellikan with fatherly affection wishes foremost the fear of God for his son Samuel, which is the beginning of the wisdom of salvation, which is increased by the Holy Spirit through the sacred study of God's word: also the fragrant reputation (*fama odorifera*) of virtues and merits, a mediocre fortune and descendants, dear to and valued by God and humans; and all this to the glory of the best and highest God, to the salvation of our descendants and of your and my fatherland (*patria*). Therefore, I desire you to pursue what has been kept from me, that is, the history of your ancestors, their lineage, their occupations, their places, their fates, for you

³⁵ Cf. "Eudaimonia", in: *Wikipedia* (English) [30.4.2010], <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudaimonia> (last seen: 1.05.2010). For more details and esp. for the difference between 'happiness' and 'eudaimonia', cf. also P. HADOT, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris, 1981).

³⁶ The English translation is my own after the Latin text: "*Conradus Pellicanus filio Samueli optat paterno affectu timorem Dei, qui initium sit sapientiae salutaris* [cf. Ps. 111,10 and Prov. 9,10, without *salutaris*]; *quae spiritu sancto adaugeatur ex studio Sacro verbi Dei: cum fama odorifera virtutum et meritorum; fortunam mediocrem et posteritatem Deo et hominibus amabilem ac gratam: ad Dei optimi Maximi gloriam et posterorum salutem patriaeque tam tuae quam meae. Quandoquidem cupio te consequi, quod mihi dolet fuisse ademptum, historiam tuorum Majorum, genus, studia, loca, fata, ad tuam et posterorum nostrorum, si dare dignabitur dominus, quod opto, pios et utiles ad proximorum salutem et Dei gloriam, institutionem, praemonitionem et ad exemplum in bonis; ut tu quoque aevo tuo victurus, similiter attendere, annotare et ad successorum sancta exempla conscribere consequenter studeas et adhorteris, ad memoriam sanctam ac utilem, non ad jactationem patrum, sed ad institutionem filiorum, hujus modi forent a doctis majoribus et successoribus tentanda. Il quod hactenus docti caelibes non potuerunt, aliqui virtutum exempla plurima filii recepissent a patribus, et non tantum divitiarum hereditas curata, sed morum magis institutio sancta fuisset promota ad posteros*", K. PELLIKAN, *Das Chronikon*, ed. as *Das Chronikon des Konrad Pellikan: Zur vierten Säkularfeier der Universität Tübingen*, ed. by B. RIGGENBACH (Basel, 1877), p. 1 (German translation: *Die Hauschronik Konrad Pellikans von Rufach: Ein Lebensbild aus der Reformationszeit*, trans. T. VULPINUS (Straßburg, 1892), p. 1).

and, if the Lord will grant them to us, which I wish, for our descendants – who may be pious and useful to their neighbours' salvation and for God's glory – as an instruction, admonition, and example towards everything that is good. Equally, while you are alive, you should for the time that follows take pains in a similar way to pay attention to, comment on, and write down for our successors sacred examples, and to admonish them to continue in the same way, for sacred and useful memory, not as the fathers' boasting, but for teaching their sons (*filiorum*), and as it was done by learned ancestors, so should the successors do as well. Hitherto scholars have been unable to do this because they had to live as celibates, otherwise sons would have received manifold examples of virtues from their fathers, and not just the inheritance of material riches would have been cared for but the holy teaching of mores to the following generations would have been more promoted.

Basic Units of Society: Persons, Households, Group Cultures

In this introduction to his autobiography Pellikan talks about himself and gives notice that he intends to deal with his person throughout the whole text. But what exactly do we learn from this passage about the basic units figuring pre-eminently in this story? Apart from the individual persons, i.e. Pellikan himself as well as his son and his nephew and his ancestors, it is the household which has a prominent place and serves as the organising structural element.³⁷ The story Pellikan combines with this basic unit of social organisation deals with the possibilities to transmit something across generations and with such possibilities being dependent on the respective type of household.

Pellikan juxtaposes two types of household. On the one hand, he mentions households of clerics as members of the special estate of the clergy and as living a life of celibacy. Similar to his own case, this may be the household of a convent, which in turn is organised as part of a religious order. Yet, as the subsequent passage shows, the same problem applies also to those clerics who had their own individual households, like his uncle Jodocus Gallus. All these clergymen either had no immediate descendants of their own to whom they could transmit their possessions or they only had illegitimate offspring. The other type of household mentioned by Pellikan and favoured by him in respect of passing on valuable possessions across generations is the household constituted by marriage, with a direct physical descendant going to be the heir. For Pellikan this was his son Samuel. But his nephew (son of his sister) as an indi-

³⁷ Cf. also G. ROHMANN in this volume.

rect heir could also serve as an addressee for him, whereas he obviously did not see the younger generation in religious ways of life – i.e. clerics – as successors to whom older celibates might transmit spiritual and other values.

What he wants to pass on requires transmission in a written form. This tradition is meant to document a way of life that is actually lived and exemplary at the same time, constituting important knowledge for the next generation. His own life as described in his autobiography, therefore, is intended as a model of an exemplary way of life. The object of this written tradition is the life of a male scholar and cleric who fits those parts of his life appearing suitable for his endeavour into a written form. He then exhorts the young men of the following generation to continue this practice in the same way, and he hands on all these spiritual values in Latin explicitly to the young male scholars of his own family. Thus, the persons appearing in this passage are not only associated with a marital household but at the same time with a scholarly group culture constituted by males. Certainly, they are not meant to be seen as abstract individuals in their individuality, detached from these relationships, basic social units, and group cultures, detached also from the appropriate social and ethical obligations.

Relationships: Dependencies, Networks, Agency

Pellikan situates those persons relevant for his story in households and in scholarly group cultures. As a starting point he takes the assumption that these basic units are constituted by relationships. In the case of households, a life-long bond through taking religious vows or through marriage is required.³⁸ The participants thus commit themselves to life in a particular type of household,

³⁸ This does not mean, however, that households themselves should be considered unchanging entities. Even those social roles constituting households as social structures were not seen by the agents as simple givens, cf. Claudia Ulbrich's highly fascinating remarks on the widow Katharina Legendre and her version in court of her performative acting as head of the household, against the opposing version that her son-in-law would automatically have been the head of household, being the male in the household. But see here as well the marriage bond – even after the death of the male spouse – constituting the foundations for Katharina Legendre's claims to have been the head of the household all the time during her daughter's marriage: C. ULBRICH, *Shulamit und Margarete: Macht, Geschlecht und Religion in einer ländlichen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1999), trans. *Shulamit and Margarete: Power, Gender, and Religion in a Rural Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Leiden and Boston, 2004: *Studies in Central European Histories* 32), pp. 78–89, 100, 105.

to a way of life, and also in some cases to particular persons; they also commit themselves to equal or unequal roles, partly establishing themselves as heads or subordinates in the context of hierarchical relationships with others. Whereas monastic ways of life include the possibility of coexistence on the same hierarchical level, the marital household, favoured by Pellikan above others, has – at least on the level of normative concepts and images – only hierarchical inequality of members and their roles, organised according to criteria of gender, age, succession of siblings and generations, and invariably structured as relations of dependency and authority.

While Konrad Pellikan found himself in the highest position, that of the male head of household, he made a choice among the several relationships which might have been of relevance for him there, concentrating on his relationships to the two young men as father and uncle. In these relationships son and nephew were dependent on him, and all three men were integrated into several networks, which reached far beyond these dyadic relationships and comprised various types of relationships. Beside kinship networks, those of scholars' group cultures were of foremost importance for them; here again they moved in a world of manifold inequalities and dependencies.

These different relationships coexisted and produced flexible social formations structured as networks. Each person in his / her respective position and affiliations was deemed as so deeply influenced by the state of these networks at any single, different moment, that these relationships, ties, and dependencies were seen as indispensable for any characterisation of any person involved. When describing a person, seemingly Pellikan and many others, however, did not consider such self-referential techniques very important which might have characterised themselves as self-contained systems in their own right, thereby also pursuing the aim of marking the boundaries and differences against other systems of the same kind.

An internal systemic character of the person appears to be as irrelevant for these authors as an endeavour of demarcating a boundary between interior and exterior. Agency in these cases does not need to be situated inside one's own person as an exclusive and inner-directing principle. On the contrary, agency would often be distributed among several persons who find themselves in hierarchical relationships with each other. The transmission of teachings of an exemplary life in a succession of generations makes use of this type of agency, that is divided between several persons in relations of dependency and authority. Against this social background as it is made visible in autobiographical

texts, an agency situated exclusively in the individual person appears to be a highly particular case which needs very specific social conditions in order to be possible at all. In addition, agency does not seem to be concentrated on self-centred aims, however indirectly they may be pursued via relationships. As Pellikan's text shows, he certainly did not intend to be invisible in modesty. But in displaying himself as an example for future generations of male scholars, he wanted to shape himself as somebody contributing to some common good, in this case concerning his household and family and the group of male Christian scholars. In particular he wanted to take care for future generations and their knowledge of how to live a life in terms of ethical flourishing and perfection. Thus, his agency was directed at something shared with others, even if he himself had some prominent position at least in some part of these communities.³⁹

Resources: Inheritance, Honour, and Performative Acting

Pellikan defines the persons relevant for himself or rather for his autobiography not least in regard of how they manage resources. Foremost, he is interested in the possessions of the household which have to be passed on to the next generation as their inheritance. His autobiography deals with a certain part of this inheritance, i.e. with teachings about a good ethical life. These are to be put into words as examples, using one's own person as a source of relevant material. Life, experience, and knowledge are to be converted into writing and to be handed down in convenient form to the heirs, making them manageable like other resources. Such teachings about life are, as he explicitly says, an immaterial part of the inheritance. Scholars had, according to him, rather few material possessions which they were able to transmit to future generations. Instead, they had the means to make visible important norms in describing suitable parts of their own lives. Moreover, by writing them down they were able to produce them in durable and transmittable form and thus to insert them into a process of handling a cross-generational tradition of household- and family-oriented *memoria*. Each generation had the obligation to pass on the *memoria* of their ancestors as well as their own. The agents of this process are envisaged foremost as the male members of the family, and according to the

³⁹ Again, thanks to Sebastian Kühn for his remarks on agency.

text of Pellikan's autobiography, the men are also the prevailing objects with whom this kind of knowledge is concerned.

It is telling that Pellikan sees *memoria* and the honour associated with it as resources, and that he quite obviously makes use of a concept here which includes immaterial resources, judging them as especially important and also as a specialised domain of the scholarly production of resources. His autobiographical text in his mind offers a particularly suitable form to contain this kind of resource. Thus, the text is not only a container of subject matter but at the same time a performative medium for creating and processing resources.

As much as Pellikan's autobiography has to say about his own person, it also presents a range of more and different topics that are at stake. Even the term 'his own person' is misleading, given that Pellikan and many others were not of the opinion that their persons belonged only to themselves, or even that they were owned by themselves. They rather felt connected to manifold obligations and common concerns, in addition to being highly aware of the power relations shaping their surroundings, their social positions, and their very persons. The resources negotiated in Pellikan's autobiography then would have to be seen much more as forms of common possessions than as freely movable, individual property.⁴⁰

Concepts of Person: Individuality and Common Matters, Spaces, Agency

The concept of the autonomous individual and the related concepts of space can be seen as highly particular historically, regionally, and socially, as has been remarked repeatedly. It seems to be a concept applying to the needs of male, white, Christian, urban, non-aristocratic, educated elites of modern societies in the north-western European and northern American regions⁴¹ – needs which may be focused on distinction from each other and especially

⁴⁰ Cf. DAVIS, "Boundaries", with her remarks on boundaries of both person and property at p. 56. For a broader context on resources cf. G. JANCKE, *Gastfreundschaft in der frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaft – Praktiken, Normen und Perspektiven von Gelehrten* (Göttingen, 2013: *Berliner Mittelalter- und Frühneuzeitforschung* 15) and *Die Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen – Ressourcenbewirtschaftung als Geben, Nehmen, Investieren, Verschwenden, Haushalten, Horten, Vererben, Schulden*, ed. G. JANCKE and D. SCHLÄPPI (Stuttgart: 2015, in print).

⁴¹ JANCKE and ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person", pp. 15 f.; G.C. SPIVAK, "Righting wrongs", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103.2-3 (Spring / Summer 2004), pp. 523-581, esp. p. 569 f., n. 18.

from all the non-elite rest of the world. After all the critical remarks about notions of the individual – is individuality just an ideology, an illusion? Is it worthwhile to continue asking questions about individuality? Why and in what respects? Instead of just to stop asking, maybe it is more important to have a closer look at the needs and wishes by which scholars are led to ask questions about individuality, as Annette Gerok-Reiter has suggested.⁴² Historians' as well as other scholars' discourses on individuality are part of the discourses of their own societies, with their specialised topics contributing to social and political agendas. My own answer would be in terms of common matters, relational and performative spaces, and agency.

The findings from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century autobiographical texts indicate that writers described themselves by focussing on relationships, activities, and resources, thus shifting attention to those concepts of person and society which are focussed on 'doing person' and on agency, on belonging and on specific social relationships, and on producing resources, as well as on exercising power over common matters. The persons emerging from these sources certainly had their specific and respective 'individualities' or particularities. But the questions arising from studying their autobiographical self-descriptions direct our attention rather to the exciting field of 'doing society' and 'doing person' through relationships, and to a vision of basic units of society that is focussed on households, their relationships, and their resources. Can a scholarly focus on 'individuality' cover this broad field of agency interwoven with highly specific social mechanisms? And is it 'individual' agency that is at stake, deriving from one single agent, oriented towards individual goals and interests? I am not sure about the answer. If we direct our questions at 'just individuality', as sketched in the first part of this essay – focussing on interior and private spaces, individual-oriented interests, autonomy, and a supposed opposition between individuals and their individuality vs. social ties and common matters – we would certainly stay captives of the concepts and concerns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Systems theory provides an ambivalent sample of analytical tools for this kind of endeavour. On the one hand, the notion that a concept of person is related to a particular society and to its specific social mechanisms and power structures, as spelled out in terms of 'inclusionary' and 'exclusionary' societies, is highly relevant and offers certainly more than most sociological theories

⁴² GEROK-REITER, *Individualität*, pp. 53 f.

in their presentist orientation would even think of.⁴³ Here there is a genuinely historical notion of how concepts of society and concepts of person are interrelated and have to be conceived in a reciprocal way.

On the other hand, it is only one concept of the person that is drawn upon by Niklas Luhmann as well as by Cornelia Bohn for both types of society. Their concept is so close to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions of the autonomous individual as to be of questionable analytical use. This applies especially to pre-modern concepts of the person, for which it has been pointed out rightly by none other than Charles Taylor that they lead modern (and I would add: even postmodern) scholars into terrains where completely unknown languages are spoken, where the "range of significances for those who don't share them" has "something irredeemably opaque".⁴⁴ In particular, Taylor argues that notions of a purely interior space, concentrated on having consciousness and mind, are in the way of understanding other societies' languages about the person.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the two types of society distinguished by systems theory suggest a dichotomy between 'exclusionary' or 'individualistic' and 'inclusionary' or 'collective' societies.⁴⁶ As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has pointed out recently when discussing contemporary discourses on the individual in global contexts, a holistic notion of certain cultures in their entirety as 'individualistic' in opposition to others which are seen as 'collective' is widespread but far from having descriptive value. She draws particular attention to the unequal distribution of agency that is at stake and to the class-specific character underlying such distinctions.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cf. F. KIPPELE, *Was heißt Individualisierung? Die Antworten soziologischer Klassiker* (Opladen, 1998), and JANCKE, "Patronagebeziehungen".

⁴⁴ C. TAYLOR, "The person", in: *The Category of the Person*, pp. 257-281, at pp. 269 f.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁴⁶ The debate about a presumed 'collective' Jewish culture makes some scholars assume that there were neither individuality nor autobiographical writings in pre-modern Jewish societies; for different results, cf. G. JANCKE, "Jüdische Selbstzeugnisse und Egodokumente der Frühen Neuzeit in Aschkenas: Eine Einleitung", in: *Selbstzeugnisse und Ego-Dokumente frühneuzeitlicher Juden in Aschkenas – Beispiele, Methoden und Konzepte*, ed. B. KLEIN and R. RIES (Berlin, 2011: *minima Judaica* 10), pp. 9-26, and RIES, "Individualisierung im Spannungsfeld differenter Kulturen".

⁴⁷ SPIVAK, "Righting wrongs", pp. 569 f., n 18; what Spivak criticises is quite common also under the headings of 'ego-centred' vs. 'socio-centred' in debates on concepts of the person, cross-culturally (cf. R.A. SHWEDER and E.J. BOURNE, "Does the concept of the person vary cross-culturally?", in: *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, ed. R.A. SHWEDER and R.A. LEVINE (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 158-199), as well as in respect of presumed gender differences, e.g. the Kohlberg – Gilligan debate of the 1980s (cf. C. GILLIGAN, *In a Different Voice*:

What can be done in order to deal with these problems while at the same time not losing the possibility for making the particularity of persons the object of historical research? First, it seems helpful to take up Mauss' idea about the person as a category in its own right. Secondly, the analytical category of the person should be distinguished from describing any particular concept of person. Analytical tools should be developed which enable scholars to describe more than just one specific notion of the person. Thirdly, concepts of the person and concepts of society should be perceived as being in close interrelationship with each other, and varying culturally as well as historically, as suggested by systems theory. But certainly a larger variety is to be taken into account than just a dichotomy of two different types of society and the related types of concept of person. Fourthly, concepts of the person should be situated within their social contexts, making gender-, class-, and *ordo*-specific distributions of agency visible. Fifthly, concepts of the person can then be contextualised and seen in their particularity, thus avoiding unfounded generalising conclusions about presumed universal analytical values of the concept.

Historically and especially in respect to pre-modern societies, people should be seen as persons within social contexts, involved in situations and views of appropriate behaviour, hierarchies, traditions, obligations, common matters, patterns, and discourses, certainly in far more respects than just their separating, autonomous, or interior individuality. As a consequence, 'individuality' would have to be re-conceived as a term with completely new meanings if we want to stay clear of the all-too-narrow and all-too-particular implications of the concept. This does not seem viable.⁴⁸ Neutral terms like 'person' and 'concept of person' seem better suited to serve as analytical categories, enabling us to apply them to all kinds of persons, elite or non-elite, to grasp persons in a complex field of entangled relations, actions, and flows of resources, i.e. considering them people busily involved in performative processes of 'doing person'⁴⁹ in relational and participative ways. They might be especially

Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, MA, 1982)); recently, cf. J. CARSTEN, *After Kinship* (Cambridge, 2004: *New Departures in Anthropology*), esp. ch. 4: "The person", pp. 83-108.

⁴⁸ I tried to do this in a first version of this essay, but the readers of a draft in this vein reacted strongly against it – my warmest thanks to these readers for testing 'individuality' as a neutral, analytical term, and for communicating that this failed in their opinion!

⁴⁹ Cf. E. HARTMANN and G. JANCKE, "Roupens 'Erinnerungen eines armenischen Revolutionärs' (1921/1951) im transepochalen Dialog – Konzepte und Kategorien der Selbstzeugnis-Forschung zwischen Universalität und Partikularität", in: *Selbstzeugnis und Person – transkulturelle Perspektiven*, ed. by C. ULBRICH *et al.* (Colgne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2012: *Selbstzeugnisse*

fruitful when used as dealing with agency and with spaces, as Natalie Zemon Davis demonstrated more than twenty years ago.⁵⁰ In any case, a new and highly fascinating path of enquiry opens up. I would like to suggest that it is worthwhile to pursue this new path and to explore persons in connection to the economy of social relations and to the mechanisms of a household society in depth and while reaching back to all kinds of sources. At stake is nothing less than a history in terms of relationships, taking people seriously as agents in power relations, and taking relationships seriously as providing the places and producing the spaces where and the ways in which society is made.

der Neuzeit 20), pp. 31-71; also J. BUTLER, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1990), ch. 1.1, considerations on consequences of the 'doing gender' discussion in respect of 'woman' as a political subject, and EAD., *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London, 1993), on the performativity of sex and gender, a field closely related to the questions discussed here; see also H. BUBLITZ, *Judith Butler zur Einführung* (Hamburg, 2002), pp. 92-97.

⁵⁰ DAVIS, "Boundaries".

Individuality and Narration: The Cases of Ulrich von Liechtenstein, Helene Kottanerin, and Johannes Tichtel

MATTHIAS MEYER

Individuality as a concept is a battleground. Different disciplines, sociology, history, philology, psychology, philosophy, neurobiology, theology, art history, to name but a few, all have (often incompatible) notions of what, when, and how individuality is.¹ It has been argued that individuality is not so much a concept as a term used in ideological warfare, and, furthermore, that it entered into the debate in a compensatory move: the rise of the debate on individuality can be seen as being closely connected with the end of the individual as it entered the masses of workers in the early nineteenth century.² Thus, many

¹ Besides the theory of Luhmann, who is the starting point for the conference, I want, as a medievalist, to point to medieval notions as put forward in the volume *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. J.A. AERTSEN and A. SPEE (Berlin and New York, 1996: *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 24); the wording of the last part of the sentence was taken from U. MARGOLIN, “The what, the when, and the how of being a character in literary narrative”, *Style* 24 (1990), pp. 453-468.

² It would be futile to attempt even a broad overview of the debates in the notes of an article. Cf. the article “Individuum, Individualität”, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*,

Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 177-197.

recent conceptual debates about individuality have one thing in common: one of their targets is to define modern individuality as being opposed to earlier states of non-individuality, group-individuality, or pre-modern individuality, which are marked by a certain degree of difference from the modern version.³ In short, the history of individuality is told as a teleological story.⁴ This is at least the story as told by many sociologists and by many medievalists. While one can see a rise of the view preferred by neurosciences, that individuality is a concept wired into our cognitive apparatus and thus a pre-individual human is biologically impossible,⁵ the constructivist view can easily overcome such positions by arguing that this form of individuality is so basic as to be uninteresting. It is the construction of certain brain circuits that leads to a self that enables mankind to free itself from the terror of an ongoing and everlasting present and develop a sense of (individual) history and, hence, the ability to learn from one's own experience. What is learned and how exactly the resulting individual is constructed is so much dependent on input, on the surroundings, that there is vast leeway for difference: a primitive hunter in the savannah thousands of years ago and a modern sociologist may share a certain amount of similarity in brain structure that leads to a basic similarity in reacting to the world. But the world is so different that the sociologist can feel quite secure in his or her non-identity with the primitive hunter. This security could be undermined by pointing to the inevitability of following certain structures of reaction, certain modes of thought that construct similarities between the primitive

4, ed. J. RITTER and K. GRÜNDER (Darmstadt, 1976), pp. 300-323. As a modern counterpart to the volume cited in note 1 I could point to *Individualität*, ed. M. FRANK and A. HAVERKAMP (Munich, 1988: *Poetik und Hermeneutik* 13).

³ Luhmann is one of the proponents (cf., e.g. N. LUHMANN, "Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus", in: ID., *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 3, pp. 149-258); in the study of literature compare H.G. SOEFFNER, "'Typus und Individualität' oder 'Typen der Individualität'? – Entdeckungsreisen in das Land, in dem man zuhause ist", in: *Typus und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. by H. WENZEL (Munich, 1983: *Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur* 4), pp. 11-44.

⁴ On the problems of teleology, compare the debate in: H. HAERLAND and M. MEYER, "Streitgespräch", in: *Historische Narratologie – Mediävistische Perspektiven*, ed. by H. HAERLAND and M. MEYER (Berlin and New York, 2010), pp. 42-444, and several articles in this volume that respond to it.

⁵ Cf. G.M. EDELMAN, *The Remembered Present: A Biological Theory of Consciousness* (New York, 1989); M. MEYER, "Der Weg des Individuums: Der epische Held und (s)ein Ich", in: *Text und Kultur: Mittelalterliche Literatur 1150-1450*, ed. U. PETERS (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2001: *Germanistische Symposien, Berichtsbände* 23), pp. 529-545; ID., *Blicke in Innere: Form und Funktion der Darstellung des Selbst literarischer Charaktere in epischen Texten des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2004).

hunter and the modern sociologist. On the other hand, this might be one of the misunderstandings happening when in the postmodern scientific discourse someone from the humanities dabbles with the results gained by neurosciences. Staying with this rather broad perspective for one more thought, it seems to me that all this amounts to the debate on the alterity or modernity of older periods of history Hans-Robert Jauss held decades ago;⁶ Jauss was adamant in keeping both aspects present, while the current debate on modern vs. pre-modern times seems to be more concerned with the question of how to emphasise the alterity of the pre-modern period.

Leaving these preliminary remarks, I should like to get closer to literary texts. The art (or the science) of reading texts has developed several methodological approaches, two classical approaches which have focussed explicitly on the individual: literary sociology and psychological readings; recently, gendered readings have shown the potential of dealing with the individual, but the relation between gender and the individual is not an easy one, and gendered readings of medieval literature have certainly no fixed implication for how a pre-modern individual is constructed. Many other methodological approaches have either no interest in the individual or evade the question.⁷

The recent rise of narratology has not alleviated the problem. In the complex systems devised by Gérard Genette (probably the last scholastic thinker), there is no room for the individual: it is a world of texts and of situations regarding narration, not of persons. This seems, at first sight, extremely counter-intuitive, as one of the central concepts of Genette's work is that of focalisation that seems to focus on individuals within a narrative. But one of Genette's prime examples makes the difference clear: in Proust's *Recherche* there is a scene where the young Marcel describes an older gentleman on the beach, not knowing who that is, while the older Marcel, the one who ostensibly writes the story, knows that it is Monsieur Charlus. Then Genette concedes that the older and the younger Marcel are the same 'person', putting person in quotation marks, but argues that this is irrelevant, relevant is only their different function, their different knowledge.⁸ The quotation marks actually make the individual vanish, or, to put it positively: "His [Genette's] interest was in describing two

⁶ H.R. JAUSS, *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur: Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956-1976* (Munich, 1977).

⁷ This is especially true of (post-) structuralist analysis of literature; cf. MEYER, "Der Weg des Individuums", pp. 529-538.

⁸ Cf. G. GENETTE, *Die Erzählung: Mit einem Nachwort von Jochen Vogt* (Munich, 1998), p. 138.

aspects of narrating, not two agents”, as William Nelles has pointed out (and one might add, not one literary character or one individual).⁹ In a reaction to his critics, Genette was even more emphatic: a literary character is only a pseudo-object, as all fictional objects are constructed completely by the literary discourse. Accordingly, it is this discourse which interests Genette, and he states emphatically that it is better and more narratological to describe how a literary character comes into being, to describe naming, description, focalisation, psycho-narration vs. interior monologue, relation to the agent of narration etc.¹⁰ This might result in a description of ‘what’ a literary character is ‘like’, but not of when, what and why. Other approaches to the ‘literary character’ have been rather on the margin of narratology, and only recently has there been a rising interest in it. Mieke Bal has at least included the literary character in her theory:

Characters resemble people. Literature is written by, for, and about people. That remains a truism, so banal that we often tend to forget it, and so problematic that we as often repress it with the same ease. ... That no one has yet succeeded in constructing a complete and coherent theory of character is probably precisely because of this human aspect. The character is not a human being but it resembles one. It has no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics which make psychological and ideological descriptions possible.¹¹

There are comparatively few narratological models that deal explicitly with literary characters, and those that do point to a very important difference to real-life individuals, namely discontinuity: every literary character is discontinuous, every real-life individual has at least bodily continuity. There are other basic differences as well: while real-life individuals inhabit the same world and are governed by the same basic principles, literary characters, while often supposedly anchored in the same world as real-life individuals, are often situated in vastly different worlds. So, after all, I might have to ask myself if individuality is not a concept alien to my discipline. One of the ways of getting around the problem of literary character is to define ‘literary character’ as being com-

⁹ W. NELLES, “Getting focalization into focus”, *Poetics today* 11 (1990), pp. 365-382, at p. 366.

¹⁰ Cf. GENETTE, *Die Erzählung*, p. 283, in reaction to the critique by S. RIMMON, “A comprehensive theory of narrative: G. Genette’s *Figures III* and the structuralist study of fiction”, *Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976), pp. 33-62.

¹¹ M. BAL, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto etc., 1985), p. 80.

posed of three components: mimetic, topical, and artificial traits.¹² The mimetic traits anchor a literary character in the world of real-life characters, the topical component is related to the content-function of a literary character: it is very high, e.g., in an allegorical being like the rake in *The Rake's Progress*. The artificial components are those that make the literary, fictional status of literary characters explicit (and, yes, they exist in medieval narratives too). In such a perception of the literary character, we have a relation to real-life individuals and, if we have indicators of a high degree of mimetic elements, we would certainly be able to learn at least how individuality was conceived of at the time of writing.¹³

Ulrich von Liechtenstein

I will address three texts during my paper; all of them have been regarded as autobiographical at one time or another, and thus are borderline cases between fictional literature and autobiography. I will start with the earliest, the *Frauendienst* or *Service to the Ladies* by Ulrich von Liechtenstein.¹⁴ Written around the middle of the thirteenth century, Ulrich's text can be described as the fictional autobiography of a lover and, consequently, a singer, who constructed a first-person narrative around 58 songs that are also transmitted, without this story, in the codex Manesse. In the introduction to his edition from 1888, Reinhold Bechstein wrote:

Inmitten der altdeutschen Zeitgedichte nimmt aber der Frauendienst deshalb eine ganz eigenartige und hervorragende Stelle ein, weil er die erste Selbstbiographie ist, die wir besitzen.

¹² J. PHELAN, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago and London, 1989), *passim*, introduced on p. 3. The same model is used by MARGOLIN, "What, when, and how".

¹³ It is here that Luhmann's notion of inclusion or exclusion individuality comes into play: We can, at least in certain medieval texts, discern how the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion are discussed. Furthermore, in many medieval stories we find a trajectory that leads to establishing a form of inclusion individuality. However, this is not only a typical trace for medieval plots, but also for many typically modern plots, especially in so-called genre-fictions. Cf. also the reservations articulated in note 33.

¹⁴ *Ulrich's von Liechtenstein Frauendienst*, ed. R. BECHSTEIN (Leipzig, 1888).

Among the ancient German contemporaneous poems, the *Service of the Ladies* is quite unique and outstanding because it is the first autobiography we have.¹⁵

And he goes on stating:

Ulrichs Erzählung macht einen so treuherzigen Eindruck, daß wir in seine Wahrheitsliebe keinen Zweifel setzen können, und um so weniger, als er auch Dinge berichtet, die für ihn keineswegs schmeichelhaft sind.

Ulrich's tale makes such an innocent impression that we cannot doubt his love of truth, and even less as he also tells about things which are not at all flattering for himself.¹⁶

Even for Bechstein some of the antics reported in the narrative are too exotic to be believed:

Ulrich suchte als echter Realist die Phantastik der romantischen Ritterdichtung in die Wirklichkeit zu übertragen, da darf es uns nicht Wunder nehmen, daß er einzelne Züge und Motive aus den Erlebnissen der gefeierten Helden in sein eigenes Leben hineinspielen ließ. ... Ulrich gehört nach meiner Auffassung zu den zwiefach gestimmten Naturen, die an das glauben, was sie sich einreden.

Being a true realist, Ulrich tried to transfer the fantasy of romantic chivalric poetry onto reality; given this we cannot be surprised that he also included individual features and motifs from adventures of the celebrated heroes into his own life. ... In my opinion, Ulrich is one of those double characters who believe in what they imagine.¹⁷

Even in nineteenth-century research this position was not unanimous, although dissent was articulated more on aesthetic than on factual grounds. Just as a reminder, Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauendienst* is a first person narrative

¹⁵ *Frauendienst*, ed. BECHSTEIN, p. VIII.

¹⁶ *Frauendienst*, ed. BECHSTEIN, p. IX.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* A modern reading that places Ulrich's text firmly into the category of autobiography (and sets it in a tradition of more lyrical autobiographies, starting with Walther von der Vogelweide and going on via the mystic Mechthild von Magdeburg to Oswald von Wolkenstein), can be found in A. CLASSEN, "Autobiographische Diskurse als Identitätsexperimente in der Literatur des Spätmittelalters", in: *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Literatur und Politik im Mittelalter: Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter"*, ed. F.V. SPECHTLER and B. MAIER (Klagenfurt, 1999), pp. 177-204.

about Ulrich's life in the service of the ladies. It is broadly divided into two parts. The first, larger part is spent in service of a lady that holds the typical position of the lady of courtly Minnesang, namely barely accepting the service, but never granting fulfilment. Interspersed are songs Ulrich sings – often they are used as a message to his lady, and while they never actually achieve their aim, they reach a courtly audience, and Ulrich sometimes states the positive reception of a song by an audience or by other singers. In this service, Ulrich performs his most prominent antics: as a knave he drinks water from the lady's finger bowl, he undergoes cosmetic surgery of his cleft upper lip, he lives in a leper colony, and he is drawn up to the ladies' bower in a wicker basket (which, of course, breaks, and he ends up in a ditch, being urinated upon by guards in the tower). And he performs the deed which has become his signature in the illumination of the Heidelberg Codex Manesse, his tournament tour disguised as Lady Venus.¹⁸ After an undisclosed transgression of this lady he quits. There is an interlinking passage where Ulrich sings *wânwîsen*, songs of hope (1376, 8), but not in service to a particular lady. A love service to a second lady follows, in which narration dwindles to a minimum, with one notable exception, an Arthurian tournament which is hijacked by political developments.

We get only glimpses of Ulrich's life beside his love service: his wife is mentioned four times in the text, his castle Liechtenstein and, later, the Frauenburg, are mentioned, as are his sons. E.g., during his long stint as Lady Venus he interrupts his tour. In his lodgings at an inn he disrobes and secretly leaves town

*und reit mit freuden, dâ ich vant
die herzelieben konen mîn:
diu kunde mir lieber niht gesîn.*

708 *Diu guot enpfie mich alsô wol,
alsô von reht ein vrowe sol
enphâhen ir vil lieben man.*

¹⁸ This is probably the episode of the text which has produced the most research; cf. among others: I. BENNEWITZ, "Eine Dame namens Ulrich, oder: Über den praktischen Nutzen von Frauenkleidern für die literarischen Helden des Mittelalters", in: *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, pp. 349-369; M. MECKLENBURG, "Ritter Venus und die Rückeroberung verlorenen Terrains", in: *Aventiuren des Geschlechts*, ed. M. BAISCH et al. (Göttingen, 2003), pp. 175-207; S. LINDEN, *Kundschafter der Kommunikation: Modelle höfischer Kommunikation im "Frauendienst" Ulrichs von Lichtenstein* (Tübingen and Basel, 2004), pp. 89-165.

*ich het ir liebe dran getân
 daz ich zuo ir was dar bekommen:
 mîn kunft ir trûren het benomen.
 si sach mich gern: als tet ich sie.
 mit küssen mich diu guot enpfie (707, 6-708, 8)*

and rode with joy to where I found
 my dearest wife whom I adore;
 I could not ever love her more.

She greeted me just as a good
 and loving woman always should
 receive a husband she holds dear.
 That I had come to see her here
 had made her really very pleased.
 My visit stilled her grief and eased
 her loneliness. We shared our bliss,
 my sweet and I, with many a kiss.¹⁹

Otherwise, the first part of the text is a biography of the author as a courtly lover / singer, whose details are much indebted to literary traditions: episodes connected to archetypal lovers (such as Tristan's disguise as a leper) are re-enacted; the lady gains much more profile than the rather nondescript lady of German *Minnesang*, but the concrete description (she is married, well guarded) is indebted to troubadour songs. The general idea, as has long been noted, might also stem from troubadour manuscripts with their *vidas* and *razos*. Even the most exalted deeds, like the severing of a finger in his love service, find their parallels there.²⁰ Perhaps, only the lip operation remains as an individual trait. But what could 'individual' mean in this context: while it is possible to find literary predecessor texts for nearly every episode, does that mean that there is no individuality in Ulrich's text? This view seems to be implicit in Ursula Peter's dissertation.²¹ But what is individual in this context: originality in self-expression? The individual combination of fixed elements? Or is it the combination of elements from different genres? Or just that Ulrich separates

¹⁹ Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Service of Ladies*, trans. in condensed form into English verse with an introd. to the poet and the work by J.W. THOMAS (Chapel Hill, 1969).

²⁰ Cf. U. PETERS, *Frauendienst: Untersuchungen zu Ulrich von Lichtenstein und zum Wirklichkeitsgehalt der Minnedichtung* (Göppingen, 1971: *Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik* 46), pp. 56-63.

²¹ PETERS, *Frauendienst*, pp. 161-172.

himself from his peers by his antics – even if these antics are borrowed? Even for the love-service biography this question seems to be difficult to answer, and it is complicated by a shift in the text: the second service shows (or rather, does not show) a lady that is much more compliant; but there is little to say about her, so on the one hand the protagonist of the story vanishes behind his songs, while on the other hand there suddenly occur political episodes: while there is a possible political subtext to the journey as Lady Venus as well, it is much clearer in the journey as King Arthur.²² And there are descriptions of the battle of Leitha and of Ulrich's prolonged period of captivity. This has nothing to do with a service to the ladies – but these episodes are not really connected to one another either. There is no continuity of a chronicle, although the literary register of a chronicle is, at least for some passages, the basic model text.

In the end, we find a literary character in the centre of the text that has a strong topical emphasis: Ulrich von Liechtenstein as the protagonist is based on one concept only, the service of ladies, to which Ulrich subscribes before he reaches adulthood. Thus, it is even more surprising when he finally leaves the service of his first lady after much humiliation. It is also fairly easy to point out the artificial elements in this literary character, since we can pinpoint many intertextual references. But it is less easy to talk about the mimetic components: Ulrich's cleft upper lip might be one, his wife at home certainly is. But his knightly deeds, and even his love service could also be mimetic not in a strictly autobiographical sense but as a mode of self-expression. With the strong emphasis on Ulrich's early years we also have a kind of individual psychology offered by the text as an explanation for his behaviour. Only when there is nothing fictional to tell anymore does he revert to fragments of his real life biography – but while in his fictional love service he achieves narrative continuity, this is not the case with the chronicles of political events in Styria.²³ Thus, in the end, we are left with two incomplete narrations – and two incomplete individuals: the lover, the fictitious individual in a literary world, is left behind when his second service becomes successful, thus following one paradox of *Minnesang* which can be stated as: as long as there is *Minnesang*, there is no *Minne*, and as long as there is *Minne*, there is no *Minnesang*. The political Ulrich is on the one hand so much fictionalised that he leaves the sphere of a real-life individual, and on the other hand he is not a real subject of narration,

²² Cf. LINDEN, *Kundschafter der Kommunikation*, pp. 213-260.

²³ Cf., however, H. DOPSCH, "Zwischen Dichtung und Politik: Herkunft und Umfeld Ulrichs von Liechtenstein", in: *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, pp. 49-104.

since the information is too fragmented to allow us a glimpse of the historical individual Ulrich von Liechtenstein. We know that love service must have played an important part in Ulrich's real life: naming his castle Frauenburg is hardly coincidental.²⁴ That he constructs this massive work as a merger of politics and literature is also indicative of a very personal interest. But Ulrich's individuality, of which this text is an expression, is somewhat lost in the process of telling the story. The *Frauendienst* is probably the most individual product of thirteenth-century literature, but it does not really present one continuous narrative individual. All the glimpses we get from Ulrich as a political figure correspond with Luhmann's idea of an inclusion individuality, while the fictitious Ulrich plays with the possibilities of exclusion. But he plays with them, he never seems to take them too seriously, as his most outrageous stint of exclusion, namely his travels as Lady Venus, is exactly that: a play that aims at forming an inclusive society of players.

Helene Kottannerin

In the afterword of the 1971 edition of the text, the *Denkwürdigkeiten der Helene Kottannerin* are introduced as the oldest German women's memoirs.²⁵ The text deals with events of the years 1439-1440. This already makes clear that it is not an autobiography as a whole. Manuscript 2920 of the Austrian National Library in Vienna contains 16 folios (the first one very damaged) which consist of what is left of the text; the last page leaves the text unfinished in mid-sentence. The text was written around 1450; some regarded the manuscript as the original, but this is somewhat unlikely; it is probably a very early copy.²⁶ In most cases the name of the protagonist and narrator, Helene Kottannerin, is left out; sometimes there is a blank space, sometimes there are initials.

The text is an account of events between Easter 1439 and June 1440, and they start with events surrounding the Hungarian uprisings against Albrecht II,

²⁴ Cf. W. DEUER, "Ulrich von Liechtenstein als Auftraggeber und Bauherr. Eine kunsthistorische Spurensuche", in: *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, pp. 133-154, esp. pp. 137-139.

²⁵ The text is cited from the following edition: *Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Helene Kottannerin (1439-1440)*, ed. K. MOLLAY (Vienna, 1971: *Wiener Neudrucke* 2). Cf. also *The Memoirs of Helene Kottanner (1439-1440)*, trans. M. BIJVOET WILLIAMSON (Cambridge, 1998: *Library of Medieval Women*). Cf. also H. VON DODERER, *Zur bürgerlichen Geschichtsschreibung in Wien während des 15. Jahrhunderts*, unpublished dissertation (Vienna, 1925).

²⁶ Cf. *Helene Kottannerin*, ed. MOLLAY, pp. 90-92.

the report of his death, the wholehearted attempts of his pregnant wife, Elisabeth of Luxemburg, to keep the rulership in her family, to avoid being forced into marriage with Polish King Władisław III, and to keep the succession open for her, as yet unborn, son Ladislaus Postumus. Ladislaus was crowned only three months after his birth, using the rightful crown, the Holy Crown of Hungary, in Stuhlweißenburg (Székesfehérvár), but the other regalia were missing. That this became possible was a result of actions taken by Helene Kottanerin, who in this text gives an account of her part in the theft of the crown.

The text has received some attention from historians, from Hungary as well as from Austria, and it is deemed to be mostly historically correct and of high testimonial value. The only passage in the text where Helene Kottanerin seems to be lying with intent is her description of the crowning of young Ladislaus Postumus, where, according to her account, all regalia were present, which flies blatantly in the face of all documentary evidence regarding sceptre, orb, and cross, and their whereabouts. In all likelihood, this account was a kind of aide-memoire, addressed to Ladislaus Postumus (and / or his advisors), who officially became king of Hungary in 1444, and who was freed from guardianship and / or imprisonment by Friedrich V of Styria in 1452. It was written with a reward in mind – a reward that was granted by March 1452, so this gives a *terminus ante quem*.²⁷ From documentary evidence we know that Helene was the daughter of a minor Austrian nobleman, Peter Wolfram, and she was married at first to the Hungarian patrician Peter Székeles, Mayor of Ödenburg, who died around 1430. In 1432 Helene remarried the chamberlain of the Viennese Cathedral provost, Johann Kottaner, considerably younger than herself.²⁸ Both marriages produced offspring, and one daughter as well as her husband are mentioned in the account. Helene was in the service of count Albrecht V, who married Elisabeth von Luxemburg and thus became King of Hungary and German-Roman King in 1437 and 1438 respectively. Helene was the governess of his daughter Elisabeth; she then became (or, in all likelihood, already was) an intimate counsellor of Queen Elisabeth.

The text starts in the style of a prose chronicle:

Do von Cristi gepurd ergangen warn fierzehenhundert vnd dar nach in dem Newn und Dreissigisten iar zu den Ostern vnd phingsten, Vnnd do der edel furst Albrecht erwelt was zu dem heiligen Römischen Kung vnd vormaligen kron zu Vngern auch

²⁷ Helene Kottanerin, ed. MOLLAY, p. 91.

²⁸ Helene Kottanerin, ed. MOLLAY, pp. 77 f.

enphangen het vnd die KungInn auch enphangen het, Do kom sein gnad her nach Prespurk vnd bleibt nicht lang hie. (9, 1-6)

It is not long before the main protagonist introduces herself:

... Do was Ich, Helene Kottanerin auch da vnd ward ich auch mit gesandt nach dem hof Kung Albrechts vnd auch seins gmēhel der edlen vnd allerdgnedigsten frawn (9, 10-12)

When after the birth of Christ fourteen hundred years had passed, and when after that the thirty-ninth year had advanced to Easter [5 April 1439] and to Pentecost [24 May 1439], and when the noble King Albert had been elected Holy Roman King and then had received the crown of Hungary, and the queen had received it too, his grace came to Pressburg and did not stay here long ... And I, Helene Kottanner, was there too, for I had been sent along to the court of King Albrecht and also of his wife, the noble and most gracious queen²⁹

But in the first part of the narrative, the first person singular is, although intermittently present, not very pronounced. More often Helene speaks in the first person plural and she also uses the reporting style of chronicles. But then things begin to change. The first event described in great detail is a visit to the Plintenburg, where the crown and other regalia, as well as the jewels of the Queen, are stored in a room, a kind of treasury, locked with many locks – Helene seems to carry the keys to most of them – and sealed with the Queen's seals. The whereabouts of the crown are in doubt, and Elisabeth decides to check whether the crown really is at the Plintenburg, since rumour has it that Albrecht has removed the crown before his sudden death of dysentery. However, the crown is at its normal place in a strongroom, and for one night the pregnant Queen sleeps in an adjacent chamber with the crown in a small box beside her. During the night a lady in waiting rises and knocks over a candle, not noticing the calamity. A fire starts but is put out quickly. Helene comments:

Es was der Kung noch verslossen in mueter leib, der die heilig kron auf solt tragen, vnd die warn kawm zwo klafter von einander, die hiet der pōs veint gern gelaidigt mit der prūnst. Aber got was huetter, der het sy zu rechter zeit aufgewecht vnd ich lag hin vor bei der Jūngen KungInn. Do komen die Junkchfrawn, ich solt pald auf sten, es prūn in dem gwelb, do meiner frawn gnad Inne låg. Ich erkam gar hart vnd stuend pald auf vnd eilat in den gmach, do was es voller rukchs, vnd ich

²⁹ The translation follows *Helene Kottanner*, trans. BIJVOET WILLIAMSON, p. 21.

temphat vnd leschat das feur vnd lies den rauhen aus, vnd machat es wider wolgeschmach, daz die edel kungInn die nacht darInn slief. (11,12-20)

The king who was to wear the Holy Crown was still safely enclosed in his mother's body and he and the crown, which the evil fiend would have liked to destroy by the fire, were hardly two cords removed from one another, but God watched over us and awakened the ladies in time, while I slept in the front room with the little princess. Then these ladies came to me and told me to get up at once because there was a fire in my gracious lady's bedroom. Terrified, I arose immediately and rushed to the room which was full of smoke, and I tempered the fire and extinguished it and let the smoke out and made the room clean and safe again, so that the noble Queen was able to sleep there quietly that night.³⁰

The next morning the crown is again locked away, but with fewer seals than before.

The central interpretation in this passage seems to come out of the mind of a medieval spin doctor: that already at this early stage the devil wants to hinder the being together of crown and future bearer is a point of view that is less an individual feature than a clerical invention. But the rest of the story – even if it might be putting events in a light favouring her – is individual: Helene gets frightened but is soon led into action, which is quick, to the point, and ultimately achieves its goal. This paradigm is now played out a couple of times in a rising arc: the next time Helene assumes centre stage is after Elisabeth lies in childbed in Plintenburg, but in the lower palace, not the upper castle, where her crown and her jewelry are. Helene, however, has the keys to the strongroom and she gets the order to bring the Queen's crown (not the Holy Crown) and the Queen's jewelry down to her lady. Helene is still free to travel between the two castles, manages to get the jewelry and brings it down on a sleigh, hidden in a bundle of her clothes. She is, however, stopped in the courtyard of the lower palace:

Da riten die vngrischen herren gegen mier vnd fragten mich her Laslawan: "Helena Quottannerin, was fuert ir her? – "Ich fuer mein gewant", vnd mein gnedige fraw was fra, daz ich ir die kleinhait gepracht het ... (13, 17-20)

And ... some Hungarian lords rode up to meet me, and Lord Ladislaus [Garai] asked me: "Helene Kottanner, what is it you are bringing with you?" – "I am bring-

³⁰ *Helene Kottanner*, trans. BIJVOET WILLIAMSON, p. 22.

ing my clothes". My gracious lady was happy that I had brought her the jewelry ...³¹

Again we find a presence of mind, and even a certain quick-wittedness. But this is only the preparation for the great coup, the theft of the Holy Crown of Hungary. A little later, Helene and an anonymous helper again enter the upper castle at Plintenburg, and they plan to open the locked and sealed room, steal the crown and close it again. Helene's task is not to open the locks but to mastermind the plot: when her companion makes himself agreeable in the ladies' chamber in order to hide a rasp among the fire-wood, the rasp is spotted and talked about by some servants. It is Helene who realises this, who warns the companion, who becomes white as a sheet. It is Helene who, with a successful lie (she says she has a lot of praying to do for the recently deceased King), procures candles for the night's work. And, as the candles are gone from the hiding place, after a brief moment of fright, she wakes the old retainer and asks for more candles. She acts as a look-out while her companion works, and several times she is bothered by his noise – but nobody seems to be awakened by it. A couple of times she has auditory hallucinations she attributes to the devil, but sticks to her prayer, and therefore she perceives the devil vanishing. Ultimately, they manage to take away the Holy Crown of Hungary sewn into cushions (the crown has, according to legend, since that time a slanted cross on top).

Again Helene is quick-witted; she is ready with subterfuge and with successful lies, while her companion is mostly there for the physical work. In diminishing proportions, this portrayal continues until the crowning of Ladislaus, where Helene holds the infant king (who mostly cries during his crowning). The rest of the text, detailing the moves of the Queen on her way away from Hungary to Wiener Neustadt, is again strictly in the detached style of a chronicle. While it is never in question that events are only governed by the will of the Queen, it is mostly Helene who does the actual work in procuring the jewelry and the crown. It is also clear that much of the description follows literary topoi: the night spent battling with the devil as Helene is praying while her companion steals the crown, the situation in the ladies' room, the joking with the ladies while having an ulterior motive. For these scenes one could find parallels either in the fabliaux tradition or in legendary texts. But does this mean Helene's account does not present an individual?

³¹ *Helene Kottanner*, trans. BIJVOET WILLIAMSON, pp. 26-27.

Aus den Denkwürdigkeiten tritt uns eine tatkräftige und schlagfertige Frau entgegen, bei der sich gesunde Natürlichkeit und praktischer Sinn mit feiner Beobachtungsgabe und guter Menschenkenntnis verbanden.

In the *Denkwürdigkeiten* we meet an energetic and quick-witted woman, combining a healthy naturalness and a sense for the practical with powers of observation and a good knowledge of human nature.³²

I am unsure whether I would agree with all parts of this statement by Karl Mollay, the editor of the text. Surely, the Helene of the text is quick-witted, even sly. The Helene presented in the text is a literary character that functions because she shows a high degree of consistency and because we are offered much by way of implicit and explicit motivation: she is not only loyal to King and Queen, but especially to the child Elisabeth and the infant Ladislaus. While as a chronicler she seems to know more than she possibly could have at the time, that never really mars the narration. During those parts she reverts to the non-personal narration of a chronicle. We only get glimpses of the individual Helene Kottanerin, restricted by the short time span covered and by the focus on certain key events – but these glimpses somehow create a picture of an individual, because they are consistent and multifaceted at the same time. Whether they are at all mimetic of the real-life individual Helene Kottanerin, we cannot know. We have only indicators that she must have been highly individual, being a Hungarian subject with no knowledge of Hungarian, although being married to a Hungarian mayor for at least 13 years, and having the skills to survive the intrigues of the Hungarian court longer than most of the rulers and courtiers.³³ These facts we know, but they are not narrated, and thus they are lost to our picture of the individual Helene Kottanerin.

Johannes Tichtel

My last example are the notes the Viennese physician Johannes Tichtel kept during the years 1477-1495 on the margin of an incunabulum of the third volume of Avicenna's canon.³⁴ This is a volume Tichtel used as a text for his

³² *Helene Kottanerin*, ed. MOLLAY, p. 83.

³³ Whether this is an indicator of a successful inclusion into the society of the Hungarian court or a sign for a successful exclusion, which guarantees survival, I am at a loss to say.

³⁴ For Tichtel's text, see: *Johannes Tichtel's Tagebuch MCCCCLXXVII bis MCCCCXCV*, ed. T.G.

university lectures, for Tichtel was not only a doctor with a thriving practice in Vienna, but also a lecturer at Vienna university and, between 1482 and 1498, dean of the Faculty of Medicine for ten subsequent periods of office. The notes start thus:

Item quarta feria post epifanie domini, Anno domini 1477, Jacobus pepert plebanus in sancto loco dedit unum florenum vngaricalem. Item sexta feria post epifanie eadem ebdomade Dominus Hermannus dedit unum florenum vngaricalem ... (8-10 Januray 1477, p. 3)

Then, on Wednesday after epiphany, 1477 AD, the priest Jakob Pepert of the holy place gave one Hungarian florin. Then, on Friday after Epiphany in the same week, mister Hermann gave one Hungarian florin ...

To state the obvious: There is no first person, no ‘I’ at the beginning of these notes. Bookkeeping takes up the bulk of the text, and the notes were certainly not meant to be read by others. They show neither rhetorical nor historiographical aspirations. We learn about the scope of his medical work. He is obviously highly in demand, travelling (on foot) to Wiener Neustadt and to several surrounding monasteries. At the arrival of the plague, we find him treating his patients and having public disputations – until he gets infected by a patient. During the siege of Vienna by Matthias Corvinus, he comments on accepting bread as a welcome fee, since flour is getting scarce in Vienna. We find traces of hope and desperation that accumulate during the siege. Quite often we find Tichtel and his wife buying vineyards in the surrounding country. From these notes we can also get a glimpse of one of the most pernicious problems in Vienna at that time: inflation. Tichtel’s notes are quite full of complaints regarding the devaluation of his money.

One can hardly say that Tichtel introduces himself – because his text has clearly never been meant to be read by others. The first at least somewhat personal statement comes early in the text:

VON KARAJAN, in: *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum: Erste Abteilung: Scriptores, I. Band: Johannes Tichtel’s Tagebuch, Sigmunds von Herberstein Selbstbiographie, Johannes Cusprians’ Tagebuch und Georg Kirchmair’s Denkwürdigkeiten* (Vienna, 1855), pp. 1-64. For further information on Tichtel, cf. VON DODERER, *Zur bürgerlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, and M. MEYER, “Narrating Vienna: Then and now”, in: *Topographies of the Early Modern City*, ed. A. GROOS et al. (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 219-237.

Item in vigilia gloriose virginis marie assumptionis vnum flor. vngar. cum vno pari cirotecarum contextarum subtilissime a quodam egregio viro, magistro petro Haniffogll de zwetl. (14 August 1477, p. 4)

Then, on the day before the Assumption of the glorious Virgin Mary, one Hungarian florin together with one pair of gloves of finest cloth from one estimable man, Master Peter Haniffogll of Zwettl.

But it is rather a long stretch from the joy over the fine material of a pair of gloves to the presence of an individual. There are several other glimpses:

Item sabatho post tiburtii 12 sz., preter 6 d. Item die tiburtij nupsi. Item Sabatho, qui fuit georgii 12 sz. 15 d. (17, 14 April 1479, p. 9)

Then, on Saturday after Tiburtius, 12 soldi less 6 dimes. Then, on Tiburtius, I married. Then, on Saturday, which was St Georges, 12 soldi, 15 dimes.

This short notice about his marriage has angered some modern readers,³⁵ but it fits in with its textual surroundings: Tichtel's notes start off mostly as an account ledger, and while there is some other information present it takes more than a happy event like a marriage to start Tichtel writing longer notes about anything but his finances. One of the first notes occurs when Tichtel is appointed Lecturer of Medicine at Vienna University by Emperor Friedrich III. There are short prayers interspersed in this passage (only 22 lines in the edition!), and it closes with *Amen, Amen, deo laudes!* – but it contains very personal impressions like:

Extensis brachio et digitis porrexit manum imperator, cum accessissem suam maiestatem cesaream, et cum abscessissem, tenendo fortiter manum meam et conquaciendo. (22 February 1482, p. 13)

With extended arm and fingers, the Emperor offered his hand while I came into his imperial glory, and while I went, he held my hand fast and shook it.

Much shorter than this passage is Tichtel's account of his infection with the plague; he gets it from one of his patients "*a quo quidem stadler*" (26 July

³⁵ Von Doderer, e.g., aims at psychology, but he does not know how to find it in this bland statement. But it is not uncommon in the late Middle Ages to talk about marriage merely as an event of financial importance; cf. MEYER, "Narrating Vienna", p. 231.

1482, p. 14) (“a certain Stadler”), and he notes where he gets the buboes, how he punctures them and how his symptoms progress. However, Tichtel survives the disease. Much more personal than the brief account of his illness is the heartfelt prayer he offers at the end of the year, written in red ink. His accounts about the siege of Vienna by Mathias Corvinus, the taking of the city, are detailed at least in some instances but contain much that is not in accordance with all other records. But even then the main body of the text is still concerned with accounting. He seems to accommodate with Corvinus, but after Corvinus’ sudden death in 1490 Tichtel emphatically greets the return of Maximilian:

Quapropter dedit populo deus omnipotens sua gracia iustissimum, castissimum, strenuissimum, bellicosissimum Maximilianum, Maximilianum, Maximilianum, Maximilianum [written in black, red, green and again black ink in double the size], *Romanorum Regem Vngarieque, quamvis invite, secundum eiusdem regni insipientiam* [written in red and underlined in green]. (2 August 1490, p. 53)

And therefore the almighty God gave to the people by his grace the most just, chaste, determined, martial Maximilian, Holy Roman and Hungarian Emperor, although unwillingly, following the lack of wisdom of this same reign.³⁶

From then on the notes return to their function as an accounting book. That Tichtel was elected superintendent of the University is also missing, as are the growing frictions between teachers and students in 1494, which year also marks the end of the notes.

Tichtel’s notes are not an autobiography: much of what historians know about Tichtel comes from the files of the University or the documents of the city. We get some glimpses of everyday life in Vienna; they corroborate archaeological and other circumstantial evidence and what we already know from other accounts of life in the city (like that by Enea Silvio Piccolomini).

Tichtel’s notes are no narrative, and they are not meant to be a narrative. Anyone reading them as such will be heavily disappointed, and treats them wrongly. They are neither more nor less than a ledger of the family finances, in which very occasionally Tichtel, leaving his bookkeeping-mode, writes something of major concern to his life. These concerns are still mainly related to

³⁶ The last part of the sentence (“*quamvis ...*”) refers to the topos of the *recusatio imperii*, where an emperor has to refuse the reign he is offered, and the final clause is a quotation from 1 Cor. 1, 27 concerning the folly of this world; for the last reference I have to thank my colleague Danuta Shanzer.

finance, like the notes regarding his wine business; even the report of his illness is a matter of loss of revenue. Just very occasionally there are divergences from this focus, e.g. when he notes that a body, taken from the gallows and delivered to the Faculty of Medicine for dissection, proves to be still alive when the scalpel is applied and is successfully revived. But those are only brief fragments, or rather nuclei of stories, and they do not amount to an autobiography. On the other hand, of my three examples this is the one that comes closest to autobiographical writing. We have an autograph, and, in some cases, whereas the words might not give a glimpse of the writer's emotional state, the change in ink might. This is the most personal document of my three examples, and whereas it does not offer a narrated individual, it gives, according to its genre, a kind of inventory of a self, for not much is really missing. We would, from a modern perspective, just expect a fundamental shift in focus, away from the financial. But the financial aspect was rather what allowed for a kind of personal and sometimes even emotional bookkeeping. Here we have Tichtel as an individual, not as an unfolded and narrated individual and literary character but as an inventory of the self of a real-life individual. It would probably be completely wrong to write a character sketch of Tichtel, using his obsessive bookkeeping as a main trait; it is merely the framework which allows for the transmission of otherwise lost data.³⁷

Conclusion

There is a close connection between individuality and narration – as can be demonstrated by the modern reception of the three texts discussed: there are a couple of stories and plays concerning Ulrich von Liechtenstein in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, there is much less reception of the *Denkwürdigkeiten* of Helene Kottanerin, but the story is used by Gustav Freytag, and there is a picture by a nineteenth-century Hungarian painter illustrating the crown's theft. But there is no modern reception of Tichtel's notes to speak of – although the story, the inventory of which we have in his notes, would be a rather good one. In all three cases we have persons who are located at the intersection of many and often conflicting discourses (I use the term in its broadest

³⁷ The importance of note keeping for Tichtel is mirrored by the importance of lists in many early modern prose narratives like *Fortunatus*, and the lists that make up many of the travel accounts of that time. Cf. the article by David Gary Shaw in this volume.

possible sense); they combine in themselves many opposing principles and thus achieve a high degree of individuality.³⁸ This is in accordance with one of the basic principles for the use of the individual in narratives: the more conflicting genres, motifs or beliefs are present in one text, the higher the need for an individual. For it is the recipients' belief in a narrative individual that keeps them focussed on the text, not the intellectual content. In the cases discussed, real life individuality is not always expressed by the narrative: Ulrich presents us with a rather monolithic (and fictitious as that) version of himself as long as he narrates consecutively, and only when the narration becomes fragmented, other aspects of the real life individual enter the story. But as a literary character, Ulrich's creation of himself was, judging from his modern reception, rather successful (the medieval reception is another matter). Helene Kottanerin does not want to tell an autobiography but comes across strongest when she uses

³⁸ I am unsure how to relate this existence at the intersection of discourses that we can find in all three examples to the system theory approach to individuality. It is abundantly clear that it is feasible to describe Ulrich, Helene Kottanerin and Johannes Tichtel in the modes of inclusive individuality: Ulrich as a member of the Styrian nobility, Helene Kottanerin as a successful member of the Hungarian court, and Tichtel as a dean and successful doctor. I would read Ulrich's play at exclusion as a way to achieve inclusion, but I have doubts in one other case: Helene Kottanerin is a member of the Hungarian court, excluded by a language barrier. She might come across as especially 'individual', because in her case we see a glimpse of what Luhmann describes as a condition of the modern individual: "Individuals must be capable of participating in all these communications, and accordingly they change their links to functional systems from moment to moment". (N. LUHMANN, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), p. 625). We see Helene Kottanerin performing those switches – but we see her in a very extreme situation. So it can be debated whether this switching is a possibility that arises only in special occasions, or whether we can assume it to be a general possibility even in pre-modern times.

But I am also doubtful whether what I search in these accounts, the representation of an 'individual', can be grasped by Luhmann's approach: Luhmann describes systems and how they react with individuals. Literature describes (and this is maybe the main function of literature – and historiography) individuals, and the ways in which they react within systems, how they feel within systems. Narratology, in encountering the messy problem of textual individuals, has to deal with these problems. And readers (especially readers of texts where someone says 'I') have to grapple with the fact that on the one hand this seems to be an invitation to look inside another individual and compare his / her strategies with ones own, on the other hand there is the irreducible barrier between the subjective and the objective, or, in the words of Thomas Nagel: it is impossible to describe what it's like to be a bat (or Ulrich / Helene Kottanerin / Tichtel; cf. T. NAGEL, "What is it like to be a bat?", in: ID., *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 165-180; ID., "Subjective and objective", *ibid.*, pp. 196-213). However, the description of their actions in the mode of systems theory might be correct – but rather bland, because the level of description / abstraction makes the individual process vanish. The structuralist fallacy is not far away when one confronts textual individuals with inclusion / exclusion-models of individuality.

narrative patterns. Tichtel is almost lost to us because there are hardly any narrative parts, but we get an inventory of a historical self – which is not a picture of an individual but the second best thing: the basis for a (re-) construction of an individual. One cannot paint a picture of the historical individual Johannes Tichtel from his notes, but one could reconstruct a possible individual.

Kinship as Catalyst of Individuation in Sixteenth-Century German House Books: A Reconsideration of Niklas Luhmann's Approach to Pre-Modern Individuality

GREGOR ROHMANN

*Je l'ay voué à la commodité particuliere des mes
parens et amis: à ce que m'ayant perdu (ce qu'ils
ont à faire bien tost) ils y puissent retrouver
aucuns traits des mes conditions et humeurs, et
que par ce moyen ils nourrissent plus entiere et
plus vifve la conoissance qu'ils ont eu de moy.*

Montaigne, *Essais*, "Au Lecteur"¹

Since the so-called postmodern theories seem to have passed their peak as a paradigm for historical analysis, it is systems theory again which provides German-speaking scholars particularly with a fashionable terminol-

¹ Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. A. THIBAUDET et al. (Paris, 1962: *Bibliothèque de la Pleïade* 14), p. 2.

.....

Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 199-232.

ogy. Its high potential to rescind, analytically, from specific contexts seems to be particularly apt to frame concepts for the increasing number of large-scale joint research projects that are shaping academic work in the first years of the twenty-first century. It gives us the illusion of talking about the same issue, while in fact we are working on questions that are empirically and systematically quite different. Thus, systems theory has in a way become the *lingua franca* of the German *Exzellenzinitiative*, as far as humanities and social sciences are concerned.

But besides providing different disciplines with (the illusion of) a shared terminology and scholars with a jargon satisfying their need for distinction, systems theory does have a vast explanatory value. Nonetheless, it does so only if it is used carefully as an analytical tool, not as a doctrine. In contrast, in their contributions on pre-modern individuality, some adherents of systems theory tend not to discuss but to rhetorically disqualify objections to Luhmann's considerations. They do not argue, but rather exclude arguments from thinking – in terms of systems theory: they use forms of communication alien to the scientific system.²

² Instead of referring to further evidence, somewhat irritated (and by the way: stylistically irritating) phrases are used, cf. for example: A. HAHN and C. BOHN, "Partizipative Identität, Selbstexklusion und Mönchtum", in: *Das Eigene und das Ganze: Zum Individuellen im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, ed. G. MELVILLE and M. SCHÜRER (Münster, 2002: *Vita regularis* 16), pp. 3-27, at pp. 5 f., p. 15: "Man braucht nur ... anzuschauen" ("Just one glimpse ... is enough"); p. 6: "Es ließen sich sicher zahllose weitere Beispiele für die hier exemplifizierte Tendenz auch in anderen Texten vorführen" ("Certainly one could present countless other examples of the tendency exemplified here also in other texts"); p. 19: "Gleichwohl ist die Zahl der Kaiser und Päpste aus dem Bauernstand im Mittelalter nicht gleich dutzendfach bekannt geworden" (sic!) "Nevertheless, it is not that we know by the dozen the number of medieval emperors and popes originating from farmers' families"); p. 21: "Fast nie findet man jedenfalls bei seinen Kritikern diesbezüglich einen Gegeneinwand [!], der sich nicht bereits als Luhmannzitat ausweisen ließe" ("At least, in this respect his critics are hardly ever capable of formulating a counter-objection [!] which could not already be proven to be a quotation from Luhmann"). Finally this ends in a sort of terminological caricature (without any further explanations): p. 22: "Alle Lösungen aber müssen dem bekannten Goldenweiser-Prinzip entsprechen, das zwar auch trivial, aber grundlegend ist. Wie ja überhaupt bestimmte Prinzipien (etwa das Thomas-Theorem oder das Eigenwert-Theorem von von Foerster) ebenso schlicht wie intrikat sind, wenn man die Fülle der Folgeprobleme bedenkt, die durch sie erzwungen werden und wenn man sich die Unwahrscheinlichkeit von Lösungen vorstellt, die sich dadurch ergeben, daß man sie nicht vernachlässigen kann" ("All solutions, however, must be in accordance with the well known Goldenweiser Principle which is trivial but fundamental. Just as anyway certain principles (such as the Thomas theorem or von Foerster's intrinsic value theorem) are as simple as they are intricate if one considers the many problems necessarily resulting from them, and if one imagines the improbability of solutions resulting from the sheer fact that they cannot be neglected"). Jargon as hermetic as this comes

And for the sake of their model's articulateness they consistently ignore empirical counter-evidence. In doing so, they rely on the methodological difference between overall abstraction and detailed study, between 'telescope' and 'microscope'.³ But methodologically it seems not sufficient to presuppose that any counter-evidence is merely aberration from an unquestionable standard. Every abstract model has to refer to an empirical basis, otherwise it is not like looking through a telescope, but more like through a zograscope.

Below I am going to make some critical remarks concerning the value of a systems theory approach for pre-modern societies. By a second step I will try to trace the meaning of the first person narrator in German house books, mainly from the sixteenth century. And finally I am going to incorporate my observations into the wider context of the anthropology of kinship in Europe and to try to connect these considerations to Luhmann's approach. By doing so I want to show that medieval individuation was not group-centred but transcendently focussed; that stratificatory differentiation understood as an early modern phenomenon was a prerequisite to modern modes of individuation; and that these modes are structurally not 'self-referential' but necessarily 'self-' and 'hetero-referential' at the same time.

The Middle Ages of Society

In his famous *Kulturgeschichte der Renaissance in Italien*, Jacob Burckhardt states that during the Middle Ages "[m]an was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation – only through some general category".⁴ He lists social formations which were to become crucial for the political thinking of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: race, people, party, corporation, family. Interestingly enough, he does not mention the two most important categories, class and nation – the former maybe because it was highly controversial politically, the latter because it was taken as a positive model of inclusion by bourgeois thinking. The autonomous, rational individual marks the political ideal of Burckhardt the Liberal, and as 'medieval' he labels everything which was exactly the opposite.⁵

close to making falsification impossible, that is: to being unscientific.

³ HAHN and BOHN: "Partizipative Identität", pp. 22 f.

⁴ J. BURCKHARDT, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Leipzig, 1928; original edn. 1860), p. 123; trans. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (Harmondsworth, 1990), p. 98.

⁵ T.M. SAFLEY, "'So lang mir Got das Leben verlihen': Personenkonzepte aus

Burckhardt explicitly revoked this theory in the 1880s.⁶ Nonetheless, it became the nearly undisputed paradigm for popular and scientific thinking on the history of the pre-modern individual.⁷ Because especially in Germany the emergence of the social sciences was fostered by the political rivalry of bourgeois liberalism and working class socialism, conceptual polarities of ‘individualism’ vs. ‘collectivism’, or ‘society’ vs. ‘community’, had a strong impact. Be it Ferdinand Tönnies, Emil Durkheim, Otto von Gierke, Georg Simmel – they all founded their concepts of society explicitly on the confrontation of modern times with the Middle Ages and on projecting either their ideal state or its contrary onto medieval times: ‘community’ was either conceptualised as a threat to individual freedom or as a safe harbour for the uprooted modern self, but both stereotypes concurred by stating that medieval society must have been shaped by a kind of primordial collectivity.⁸ Even very recent accounts continually refer to concepts of medieval holism vs. modern individualism.⁹

Implicitly or explicitly, contemporary rural society was conceived as both holistic and communitarian as well, in contrast to urban modernity – be it as an ideal world compared with the absence of social bonds which are allegedly

Selbstzeugnissen der schwäbischen Kaufleuteschaft in der frühen Neuzeit”, in: *Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung*, ed. G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH (Göttingen, 2005: *Querelles* 10), pp. 108-127, at pp. 109 f.

⁶ O.G. OEXLE, “Luhmanns Mittelalter”, *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 10 (1991), pp. 53-66, at p. 59.

⁷ OEXLE, “Luhmanns Mittelalter”, pp. 59 f.

⁸ OEXLE, “Luhmanns Mittelalter”, pp. 59-61; O.G. OEXLE, “Konsens – Vertrag – Individuum: Über Formen des Vertragshandelns im Mittelalter”, in: *Das Individuum und die Seinen: Individualität in der okzidentalen und der russischen Kultur in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Y. BESSMERTNY and O.G. OEXLE (Göttingen, 2001: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte* 163), pp. 15-37, at pp. 20-26; ID., “Soziale Gruppen in der Ständegesellschaft. Lebensformen des Mittelalters und ihre historischen Wirkungen”, in: *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen: Texte – Bilder – Objekte*, ed. O.G. OEXLE and A. VON HÜLSEN-ESCH (Göttingen, 1998: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte* 141), pp. 9-44, at pp. 14-16; D. IOGNA-PRAT, “Introduction générale: La question de l’individu à l’épreuve du moyen âge”, in: *L’individu au Moyen Âge: Individuation et individualisation avant la modernité*, ed. D. IOGNA-PRAT and B.M. BEDOS-REZAK (Paris, 2005), pp. 7-29, at pp. 9 f.; J.-Cl. SCHMITT, “La découverte de l’individu: une fiction historiographique?”, in: ID., *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps* (Paris, 2001), pp. 241-263, at pp. 244-247; S. SCHMOLINSKY, “Selbstzeugnisse finden, oder: Zur Überlieferung erinnerter Erfahrung”, in: *Self-Fashioning: Personen(selbst)darstellung*, ed. R. SUNTRUP and J.R. VEENSTRA (Frankfurt am Main etc., 2003: *Medieval to Early Modern Culture* 3), pp. 23-52, at pp. 26 f.

⁹ Cf. SCHMITT, “La découverte”, pp. 247 f., on Louis Dumont.

typical of urban life, be it as the bugbear of a non-enlightened periphery.¹⁰ In modern, complex society, in urban, bourgeois life, according to classical social historical narratives, these primordial bonds of kinship, status and community are said to have been dissolved in favour of the autonomous self.¹¹

Typically, medievalists have come to agree on assuming a fundamental shift to proto-modern individualism by the so-called 'Renaissance of the twelfth century'.¹² So the stereotype of static, holistic, irrational medieval society is transferred some three hundred years backwards, but not deconstructed at all.¹³

The ideological traits of all these assumptions have already been sufficiently critiqued. These allegedly autonomous individuals turn out to have been deeply rooted in forms of collectivity. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century male bourgeois life was structured by long-lasting social bonds: academies, clubs, societies, students' associations – bonds often meant to be life-long. And when it comes to kinship: nineteenth-century savants declared that kinship did not play any role in their social life, other than in the pre-industrial societies they were investigating. But, as David Warren Sabean has pointed out, many an anthropologist and sociologist – Lewis Henry Morgan and Max Weber for example – lived in the same cousin marriage that was stated to be typically indigenous, and that was in fact specific for nineteenth-century bourgeois sociability.¹⁴ But these kinship ties ruling everyday life were systematically excluded from sociological thinking as part of a private, that is, feminine sphere. Accordingly, post-colonial and gender studies have deconstructed the concept of modern autonomous individuality or identity as a model of self-conception for male, white, protestant, bourgeois Europeans and North-Americans. The

¹⁰ W. TROSSBACH, "Individuum und Gemeinde in der ländlichen Welt", in: *Entdeckung des Ich: Die Geschichte der Individualisierung vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by R. VAN DÜLMEN (Darmstadt, 2001), pp. 197-217, at pp. 197 ff., especially on Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's *Naturgeschichte des deutschen Volkes* (1851-1869).

¹¹ Very recently: R. VAN DÜLMEN, "Einleitung", in: *Entdeckung des Ich*, pp. 1-7, at pp. 3 f.

¹² H. RÖCKELEIN, "Zwischen Psychohistorie und Mediävistik", in: *Moderne Mediävistik. Stand und Perspektiven der Mittelalterforschung*, ed. H.-W. GOETZ (Darmstadt, 1999), pp. 288-299, at pp. 292 f.; C.W. BYNUM, "Did the 12th century discover the individual?", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980), pp. 1-7; SCHMOLINSKY, "Selbstzeugnisse finden", p. 27; SCHMITT, "La découverte", pp. 249-255.

¹³ Cf. SCHMOLINSKY, "Selbstzeugnisse finden", p. 27.

¹⁴ D.W. SABEAN and S. TEUSCHER, "Kinship in Europe: A new approach to long term development", in: *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long Term Development (1300-1900)*, ed. D.W. SABEAN et al. (New York and Oxford, 2007), pp. 1-32, esp. p. 23; D.W. SABEAN, "Kinship and class dynamics in nineteenth-century Europe", in: *Kinship in Europe*, pp. 301-313.

traditional 'holism' is attributed not only to medieval and rural society, but also to non-western society and to women in general.¹⁵ The usual 'guiding texts' of research on autobiographical writing, like those by Jean Jacques Rousseau and others, are in this sense no longer seen as expressions of self-exploration but as reactions to social demands for psychological self-monitoring.¹⁶ In any case, the idea of an autonomous self can only be perceived as a historically specific form of staging, as a tale the modern person wants to tell about him / herself.¹⁷ And at least outside erudite circles familiar with Rousseau and the likes this model is by no means unchallenged: sociologists often forget that for most of our contemporaries the 'ordinary guy' is the ideal, not the 'eccentric'. Every scholar working on self-testimony should examine her / himself scrupulously: when did you last reflect on your 'self' as such, without 'hetero-reference'? 'Self-reference' is probably more a kind of semantics for an erudite pastime than one for socially real individuation.¹⁸

Hence, it is Franz-Josef Arlinghaus's great merit to have instigated a reconsideration of pre-modern (and modern) individuality from a systems theory point of view. Because it was Niklas Luhmann who called for a sociological model of the history of selfhood independent from old stereotypes of primordial holism vs. modern individualism.¹⁹ According to him, these are only effects on the level of semantics, answering to specific changes on the level of social structures. Because, according to Luhmann, one has to discern between social structures, that is, generalised expectations, and semantics, that is, the way people think and speak about an issue.²⁰ Semantics mirror changes in

¹⁵ G. JANCKE and C. ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung", in: *Vom Individuum zur Person*, pp. 7-27, at pp. 8 f., 22 f.; U. LUIG, "Dynamische Konstrukte: Vorstellungen zu Person, Selbst und Geschlecht in afrikanischen Gesellschaften", in: *Vom Individuum zur Person*, pp. 29-50, at pp. 29 f.; E. KORMANN, "Ich und Welt in der Autobiographik des 17. Jahrhunderts: Heterologe Selbstkonzepte bei Maria Elisabeth Stampfer und Elias Holl", in: *Vom Individuum zur Person*, pp. 97-107, at pp. 99-102.

¹⁶ M. SONNTAG, *Das Verborgene des Herzens: Zur Geschichte der Individualität* (Reinbek, 1999).

¹⁷ E. KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott: Autobiographik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2004: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 13), p. 6.

¹⁸ Cf. JANCKE and ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person", pp. 16-22.

¹⁹ N. LUHMANN, "The individuality of the individual", in: *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T.C. HELLER et al. (Stanford, 1986), pp. 313-329, at pp. 313 f., 318; OEXLE, "Luhmanns Mittelalter", p. 58.

²⁰ N. LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1980-1989), 1, pp. 9-72; C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), p. 32.

social structure, they can foster expectations and thereby shape structure, but they can also differ from the given social reality, virtually as a playground of social change.²¹

Instead of reproducing older assumptions on the evolution of human society, Luhmann defines three stages, characterised by socially predominant modes of differentiation: the ‘segmentary society’ is primarily structured by kinship groups (clans and the like) and houses; the ‘stratificatory society’ by social strata (estates, castes); the ‘functionally differentiated society’ by subsystems providing society with a specific function.²² In ‘segmentary’ and ‘stratificatory’ societies each person is a member of only one predominant social group, the clan (segmentary) or stratum (stratificatory) he / she was born into. This means that the person is included totally by this social group (*Inklusionsindividuum*). Pre-modern society does not consist of individuals but of groups.²³

In modern, functionally differentiated societies, functional subsystems tend to include everyone irrespective of pedigree, profession and the like. But they cannot include the person as such, only as the bearer of specific social roles. So the individual loses its unquestionable place in society. It no longer has to be defined by referring to one single social group, but to itself as a consignee for the roles it has to play within the different subsystems. Thus, as a whole it is necessarily excluded from society, so that it can be partially included into functional subsystems (*Exklusionsindividuum*).²⁴ Here Luhmann relies on Simmel’s “*Normierung des Ich durch das Ich*” (“standardisation of the I by the I”), but implicitly confines this concept to modern societal settings.²⁵ In order to

²¹ BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, p. 50.

²² P. WINDOLF, “Einleitung: Inklusion und soziale Ungleichheit”, in: *Inklusion und Exklusion: Analysen zur Sozialstruktur und sozialen Ungleichheit*, ed. R. STICHWEH and P. WINDOLF (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 11-27, at p. 11.

²³ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 157 ff.; LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, p. 318; WINDOLF, “Einleitung”, pp. 13, 16; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 33, 55 f.; C. BOHN, “Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität”, in: *Sinngeneratoren: Fremd- und Selbstthematisierung in soziologisch-historischer Perspektive: Alois Hahn zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. C. BOHN (Konstanz, 2001), pp. 159-176, at p. 160-164; HAHN and BOHN, “Partizipative Identität”, pp. 3 f.

²⁴ LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, p. 319; WINDOLF, “Einleitung”, pp. 12, 16; LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 158 f., 212 ff.; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 33, 39 f., 41-43; EAD., “Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität”, pp. 171 f.

²⁵ G. SIMMEL, *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (= *Gesammelte Werke* 2), 5th edn. (Berlin, 1968), pp. 21 ff.; cf. OEXLE, “Konsens – Vertrag – Indivi-

accomplish this exclusion of the individual as a whole from society, according to Luhmann, European culture developed semantics of an autonomous self which is not identical with any group or other person but different in itself, standing vis-à-vis society.²⁶

In this sense, following Luhmann, pre-modern persons had been able to develop a stable, unambiguous identity provided by kinship and stratum, while modern persons can merely refer to role identity.²⁷ That is to say that Luhmann reverses the idea of identity current in interactionist theory postulating I-identity (*Ich-Identität*) as being specific for modern societies and role identity as being specific for pre-modern ones.²⁸ And Luhmann's model of modernisation is not affirmative but pessimistic: the human loses the centre of its being, the given social bonds.

Medievalists have either emphatically disclaimed Luhmann's thinking, like Otto Gerhard Oexle,²⁹ or acceded to it with some important modifications, like Peter von Moos.³⁰ But, as a matter of fact, Luhmann and his followers refused (and continue to refuse) to discuss their model of pre-modern society with reference to empirical evidence.³¹ Instead they refer to sources from the six

duum", pp. 20-25; LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 212.

²⁶ BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 40 f.

²⁷ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 193, 223, 251.

²⁸ Cf. G. ROHMANN, "Eines Erbaren Rathes gehorsamer amptman": Clemens Jäger und die Geschichtsschreibung des 16. Jahrhunderts (Augsburg, 2001: *Studien zur Geschichte des Bayerischen Schwaben* 28), pp. 91-101.

²⁹ OEXLE, "Luhmanns Mittelalter"; ID., "Vertrag – Konsens – Individuum".

³⁰ P. VON MOOS, "Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum", in: *Processi di inclusione ed esclusione: identità ed emarginazione – Prozesse von Inklusion und Exklusion*, ed. C. BOHN and A. HAHN (Milan and Berlin, 2006), pp. 253-265, at p. 260; ID., "Einleitung: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation vor der Moderne: Zum Wechselspiel von sozialer Zuschreibung und Selbstbeschreibung", in: *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*, ed. P. VON MOOS (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2004: *Norm und Struktur* 23), pp. 1-42.

³¹ BOHN and HAHN, "Partizipative Identität", p. 14; p. 20: "schließlich ist das Mittelalter lediglich der Horizont für Luhmanns Theorie der Ausdifferenzierung" ("after all, the Middle Ages are only a horizon for Luhmann's theory of differentiation"); N. LUHMANN, "Mein Mittelalter", *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 10 (1991), pp. 66-70, at pp. 66 f.: "Wenn ich das Mittelalter, die mittelalterliche Gesellschaft, die mittelalterliche Semantik usw. erwähne, denke ich nur an eine eingeführte Epochenbezeichnung, die den Vorteil hat, daß man nicht genauer angeben muß, wovon man redet. ... Der Begriff des Mittelalters ist aber, wenn überhaupt ein Begriff, jedenfalls kein theoretisch fixierter, theoretisch verwendbarer Begriff" ("If I mention the Middle Ages, medieval society, medieval semantics aso., I simply refer to the generally accepted name of an epoch showing the advantage that there is no need to state in more detail what one is talking about. ... However, the concept of the Middle Ages, if it is a concept at all, is no theoretically

teenth to the eighteenth century and are adamant that the results can count for the time before.³² Additionally, Luhmann explicitly refused interpretations by mere reference to well-known VIPs of intellectual history, and advocated the reading of second-rank authors as sources for average semantics.³³ Instead, his epigones cite Rousseau, Saint-Simon and the likes as main evidence.³⁴ Therefore, the semantics they determine are quite elitist, indeed.

The Middle Ages only attract the attention of scholars of systems theory as a background for their evolutionist assumptions. That is why they tend to ignore every empirical confusion. That is why they regularly fall back into stereotypical clichés about pre-modern society instead of scrupulously elaborating their model of social change, taking those thousand years as an entire part of European history.³⁵

For instance, Luhmann, Bohn and Hahn alike do not clearly differentiate between segmentary and stratificatory societies.³⁶ In the latter, according to systems theory, belonging to a stratum is normally conveyed by kinship, because the inside of strata is organised in the same way as the former, segmentary society. Even the feudal estates are only seen as emanations of genealogy. Thus, systems theory takes kinship as the primordial structure reigning over inclusion or exclusion before modern times.³⁷ But, as Otto Gerhard Oexle has pointed out, medieval society was not primarily structured by kinship ties and other traditional bonds but by negotiations, contractual alliances and voluntary confraternities.³⁸ Competing individuals constituted these social groups; pri-

fixed or theoretically applicable concept”); cf. VON MOOS, ‘Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum’, p. 254.

³² For example: LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 149-175.

³³ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 9 f.

³⁴ HAHN and BOHN, “Partizipative Identität”, p. 4: “*Noch in den adligen Memoiren des Ancien Régime (man denke etwa an St.-Simon) ist die zentrale Absicht der Autoren gerade nicht, sich selbst in ihrer Einzigartigkeit darzustellen*” (“Still in the nobility memoirs of the Ancien Régime (just think about St.-Simon, for example) it is precisely not the authors’ central intention to present themselves as being unique”); BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 43, 58-64 (on eighteenth century “*Originalgenie*”), 129 ff. (on the French moralist discourse of the seventeenth century).

³⁵ Cf. OEXLE, “Luhmanns Mittelalter”, pp. 65 f.

³⁶ HAHN and BOHN, “Partizipative Identität”, pp. 19 f.

³⁷ LUHMANN, “Mein Mittelalter”, p. 68; LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 157, 165.

³⁸ OEXLE, “Luhmanns Mittelalter”; OEXLE, “Konsens – Vertrag – Individuum”, esp. p. 15-20; OEXLE, “Soziale Gruppen”, pp. 19-25, 32-38, 42 f.

mordial groups did not constitute the individual.³⁹ Being member of a guild was not mediated by birth but by oath, being a nobleman's vassal was not the result of genealogy but of fealty; becoming noble (only to a lesser extent) came about not by pedigree but mainly by power and habitus. Because, following Joseph Morsel, the 'nobility' as an estate in terms of genealogical exclusiveness is not a medieval phenomenon but one of the times from the fifteenth century onwards.⁴⁰ That is to say, there was no *Adelssystem*⁴¹ in a genealogical sense before early modern times. Thus, the core of Luhmann's model is called into question.⁴²

Medieval persons were certainly able to be members of more than one subsystem, for example a guild, a parish, a religious brotherhood, a household and so on. Actually, contrary to Luhmann's projections,⁴³ a medieval person was not only able to be, but rather necessarily was a member of more than one kinship group. Because kinship is by no means naturally given but socially arranged.⁴⁴ It does not always, not even in the majority of cases, mean patrilineal, agnatic sequences marked by a house, a name, a pedigree, but mostly a network of cognates' alliances, in which every Ego is essentially linked to various other persons and groups. And again, as Simon Teuscher, David Sabeau, and others have pointed out, these cognate kinship structures ('kindred') were replaced by patrilineal, agnatic ones ('lineages') only at the waning

³⁹ OEXLE, "Konsens – Vertrag – Individuum", pp. 27-31.

⁴⁰ With further reference: J. MORSEL, "La construction sociale des identités dans l'aristocratie franconienne aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles: Individuation ou identification?", in: *L'individu au Moyen Âge*, pp. 79-99.

⁴¹ HAHN and BOHN, "Partizipative Identität", p. 20.

⁴² LUHMANN, "Mein Mittelalter", p. 68: "*Aber die allgemeine These, daß es, soziologisch gesehen, um ein Auswechseln der vorherrschenden Form gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung geht, weist ins Mittelalter zurück; und sie wäre empirisch empfindlich für den Fall, daß sich herausstellen sollte, daß es im Mittelalter keinen Adel und keine stratifizierte Gesellschaftsordnung gegeben habe*" ("But the general thesis according to which it is, generally seen, about changing the predominating way of social differentiation, refers to the Middle Ages; and it would be empirically sensitive if it should turn out that there was no nobility and no stratified social order in the Middle Ages").

⁴³ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 160: "*Wenn man einer Familie angehört, kann man nicht zugleich anderen angehören, denn das würde gewissermaßen zu einer monströsen Individualität, zu einer Mischindividualität führen*" ("If one belongs to one family, one cannot be the member of another one at the same time, for this would so to speak result in a monstrous kind of individuality, in a mixed individuality").

⁴⁴ B. JUSSEN, "Künstliche und natürliche Verwandtschaft? Biologismen in den kulturwissenschaftlichen Konzepten von Verwandtschaft", in: *Das Individuum und die Seinen*, pp. 39-58.

of the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Patrilineal kinship is not primordial or traditional but concomitant to the process of state building. Sixteenth- or seventeenth-century society turns out to have been much more ‘segmentary’ than seventh- or thirteenth-century society.

Indeed, medieval society did know concepts of rank and status. But the well-known order of the God-given three estates was not undisputedly real on the level of ‘social structure’, but only a – very powerful, indeed – discourse on the level of ‘semantics’.⁴⁶ Luhmann and others, despite their own avowals, here take a contested semantic concept for the structure. Thus, only if we take ‘strata’ and ‘stratificatory’ not as clear-cut social facts but as claims for communicative addressing,⁴⁷ the concept of *Inklusionsindividuum* will keep its value for medieval history. In pre-modern social communication (that is, on the level of semantics) the person was normally addressed as the member of a stratum. But this membership was not necessarily stable, hereditary or unidimensional. Medieval narratives on status and personhood usually toy with just this difference between semantics and structure. Maybe the semantics of stratification fostered generalised expectations on behaviour and thus induced a shift in social structure from contractual to stratificatory and kinship ties. But primarily, in the Middle Ages the *Inklusionsindividuum* seems to have been only an effect of semantics, not of social structure. What Luhmann calls the ‘stratificatory society’ is, as far as the social structure is concerned, a phenomenon only of early modern times.⁴⁸ So it is no wonder that his and his followers’ scant evidence is taken from the fifteenth to eighteenth century, almost without exception.

Further on, systems theory describes the *Inklusionsindividuum* as being shaped not by singularity but by typological thinking, not by difference but by identity with normative, exemplary concepts.⁴⁹ This apparently reproduces Karl Lamprecht’s assumption that medieval persons were not individual but

⁴⁵ Cf. in general: *Kinship in Europe*.

⁴⁶ Cf. OEXLE, “Soziale Gruppen”, pp. 40–44.

⁴⁷ R. STICHWEH, “Leitgesichtspunkte einer Soziologie der Inklusion und Exklusion”, in: *Inklusion und Exklusion*, pp. 29–42, at p. 30.

⁴⁸ This was also suggested by Simon Teuscher during the Bielefeld symposium this volume refers to.

⁴⁹ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 173–175; HAHN and BOHN, “Partizipative Identität”, pp. 4 f.; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 21, 64–67; BOHN, “Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität”, p. 159.

typical⁵⁰ and thus repudiates Luhmann's own claim to vanquish older evolutionary concepts.

How do scholars of systems theory try to integrate Christianity into their model of stratification? Luhmann already mentions the eschatological etymology of the term 'individual': the human soul is indivisible, because it is immortal and will experience either salvation or perdition.⁵¹ But private devotion, according to him, was only emerging from the sixteenth century onward, therefore he is able to categorise it simply as part of the overall shift from inclusion to exclusion individuality.⁵² Bohn and Hahn, however, try to correlate their model with the idea of the 'Renaissance of the twelfth century'. In scholastic ethics and in the change from penitence to auricular confession they see the new starting point of the *Exklusionsindividuum*, disposed within the subsystem of a religion that, prior to other religions, functionally differentiates itself within the stratificatory society.⁵³ But even if they admit that the Christian concept of eschatologically founded individuality was not just an elitist phenomenon for monks and hermits but a general principle rivalling that of stratification in medieval thought,⁵⁴ they stick to an evolutionist conception of individuality gradually replacing stratification.⁵⁵

According to Peter von Moos, even Augustine considered that every human being has its own, distinguishable face, because unlike animals and angels, man as an individual will stand responsible on Judgement Day. According to Von Moos, this concept of individuality was specific to medieval Christiani-

⁵⁰ K. LAMPRECHT, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 12 vols. and 2 incomplete vols., 2nd edn. (Berlin, 1922), 12, pp. 3-48; already critical: A. DOPSCH, "Wirtschaftsgeist und Individualismus im Frühmittelalter" (1929), in: ID., *Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte = Gesammelte Aufsätze* 2 (Vienna, 1938), pp. 154-186, at p. 168 ff.

⁵¹ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 175, 194.

⁵² LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 169 f., 176 f., 187 f.; LUHMANN, "The individuality of the individual", pp. 315 f.

⁵³ BOHN, "Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität", pp. 163-167; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 21, 37 f., 44, 56; HAHN and BOHN, "Partizipative Identität", pp. 10-16.

⁵⁴ HAHN and BOHN, "Partizipative Identität", pp. 12-14; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 56 f.; cf. VON MOOS, "Inklusionsindividuum und Exklusionsindividuum", pp. 260 f.

⁵⁵ HAHN and BOHN, "Partizipative Identität", pp. 23-25 (on the influence of stratification on monastic life).

ty,⁵⁶ but Bohn underhandedly reverses the argument and asserts that medieval literature had been astonished by just that.⁵⁷

Even though Bohn and Hahn acknowledge the impact of religion on the emergence of the exclusion individual, they tend to pursue the traditional rationalist renunciation of transcendental reference as being disqualified by the Enlightenment.⁵⁸ This raises the suspicion that here stereotypes of modernisation and rationalisation instead of empirical evidence reign. Because otherwise one would have to integrate the empirical fact that a large number of our contemporaries are still religious believers, which means that their self-perception cannot be adequately described without transcendental reference. The ideal model of ‘self-referentiality’ does not work as a model for social research, because ‘God’ continues to be a reference for quite a few today – even if they are insistently disregarded by we scientists as living fossils. So we can only speak of a ‘self-referential’ individuation in recent societies if we exclude not only women, peasants, non-whites and non-Europeans, but rather all non-atheists from our analysis.

If, as Morsel and Teuscher and Sabeen have proposed, stratification and patrilineal kinship are not successively waning but rather increasing in structure and impact during the later Middle Ages, then why not hypothesise that Christian transcendental individualism must have been the earlier stage which was later overcome by *Inklusionsindividualität*?

⁵⁶ VON MOOS, “Einleitung”; VON MOOS, “Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum”, p. 256 and n. 13.

⁵⁷ BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, p. 66, n. 27: “So erklärt sich die Verwunderung in der mittelalterlichen Literatur darüber, daß Gott den Menschen verschiedene Gesichter gegeben habe, wo es der zeitgenössischen Semantik viel eher entsprochen hätte, wenn sie alle gleich aussähen” (“This explains why medieval literature expresses astonishment about the fact that God gave different faces to humans, given that it would have been much more appropriate to contemporary semantics if they would all look the same”).

⁵⁸ BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, p. 57: “Verdamnis und Höllenvorstellungen ... [sind] seit der Aufklärung gegenstandslos geworden” (“Damnation and images of hell ... [have] become obsolete since Enlightenment”). BOHN, ‘Inklusionsindividualität und Exklusionsindividualität’, p. 173, on religion as mere retention pond (“*Auffangstation*”) for cases of failed functional differentiation.

Hetero-Referentiality and Self-Referentiality

The extra-societal position of the modern *Exklusionsindividuum* is categorised by Franz-Josef Arlinghaus in his introduction to the Bielefeld workshop as being ‘self-referential’. In contrast, the position of the *Inklusionsindividuum* in pre-modern society, whose identity is said to have been shaped by the group it belonged to and by reference to God, is labelled as ‘hetero-referential’. Thus, ‘hetero-referentiality’ is said to have been the *modus operandi* of pre-modern individuality.

But according to Luhmann, *Selbstreferentialität* (‘self-referentiality’) and *Heteroreferentialität* (‘hetero-referentiality’) are not antagonistic and especially not to be aligned diachronically (as one following the other), but rather they are two sides of the same coin. They refer to two different levels of abstraction in describing the emergence of the individual, that is: the ‘conscious system’ (*psychisches or bewusstes System*) within its environment. Every human being in every social setting is ‘self-referential’ insofar as it can be described as an autopoietic system, reproducing itself out of itself. And the same ‘psychological’ or ‘conscious’ system is ‘hetero-referential’ insofar as it necessarily communicates with other conscious systems.⁵⁹ In this sense, ‘self-referentiality’ and ‘hetero-referentiality’ are, according to Luhmann, similarly universal on the structural level. Autonomous singularity is only a mode of description on the level of semantics, useful to disguise the structural reality of the *Exklusionsindividuum*.⁶⁰

For this paradox of semantic requisition Luhmann also uses the term ‘self-reference’ (*Selbstreferenz*).⁶¹ And he even notes that until the seventeenth century descriptions of the individual had been ‘hetero-referential’.⁶² So Luhmann himself blurs his concept of individuation by fusing analytical levels of structure and semantics. But he, and also Bohn, are very clear in stating that the self-referentiality of the modern individual is not per se real on a structural

⁵⁹ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 161-165, 227 f.; LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, pp. 321-325; N. LUHMANN, “Die Autopoiesis des Bewußtseins”, in: *Selbstthematisierung und Selbstzeugnis: Bekenntnis und Gedächtnis*, ed. A. HAHN and V. KAPP (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), pp. 25-94, at pp. 26-28, 58-61; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, p. 54.

⁶⁰ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 159 f., 223.

⁶¹ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 180-186, 243 f.; LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, pp. 314 f.; LUHMANN, “Autopoiesis des Bewußtseins”, pp. 75 f.; cf. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 64-68, 146 ff.

⁶² LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 178.

level, but primarily a form of staging on the level of semantics.⁶³ In trying to bridge semantics and structure, one could say that the change from inclusion to exclusion on the structural level causes an ideological misconception on the semantic level, a blindness for the necessary ‘hetero-referentiality’ of the conscious system as one communicating with other systems, and an overemphasis of the ‘self-referentiality’ of the conscious system as one reproducing itself autopoietically. Surely this misconception on the semantic level can foster a shift in social structure in the long run, so that ‘self-referentiality’ obtains impact.⁶⁴ But even then, according to systems theory, there could never be something like an absolutely ‘self-referential self’ on the structural level.

But is it always ‘hetero-referential’, then? On the one hand, Luhmann historicises interactionist theories on socialisation like George Herbert Mead’s as dealing only with semantic effects, with mere means for compensating the loss of inclusion.⁶⁵ On the other hand, he and other adherents of systems theory rely heavily on Mead to explain their concept of individuality – pre-modern as well as modern.⁶⁶ Hence the individual, as a conscious system linked to other conscious systems, is always ‘hetero-referential’ in its indefinite process of socialisation, while historically and socially its referents, the environmental factors it communicates with, are changing.

Here again the gap between structure and semantics has to be considered. On the structural level every conscious system is always simultaneously self-referential and hetero-referential. On the semantic level the pendulum can swing to either side depending on the situation. Either of these principles could be drawn on for the staging of the individual, but this is always a mere pretension answering or camouflaging inclusion or exclusion.

Based on similar considerations, Verena Olejniczak rejected Charles Taylor’s conceptual confrontation of pre-modern ‘heteronomy’ and modern ‘autonomy’.⁶⁷ As an alternative she suggested comprehending pre-modern speaking about one’s self as ‘heterologous’ (*heterolog*), a term that, according to her,

⁶³ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 165; BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person*, pp. 67 f.

⁶⁴ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 7 f. (on semantics as a playground of social change), 214 (on the structural impact of self-referentiality).

⁶⁵ LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, p. 316.

⁶⁶ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 152; HAHN and BOHN, “Partizipative Identität”, p. 12; VON MOOS, “Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum”, pp. 254–256.

⁶⁷ V. OLEJNICZAK, “Heterologie”, *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 26 (1996), pp. 6–36, at pp. 7–10.

could mark the inescapably contextual and constructive character of subjectivity.⁶⁸ According to her, what we come to detect in medieval or early modern sources on someone's self is always and necessarily only an effect of writing, of what systems theory calls 'semantics'.⁶⁹ It does not, or only slightly, reflect the structural conditions of individuation.

And even if either form of referentiality might have been prevalent in this or that specific context, even if this fosters congruent changes on the structural level, semantics are always polymorphic and multivalent. No description is ever unchallenged, and neither is the highly elitist concept of 'self-referentiality' (autonomy) vs. 'hetero-referentiality' (holism). Thus, correlating 'hetero-referentiality' with pre-modern and 'self-referentiality' with modern individuality tends to reproduce classical stereotypes concerning the history of subjectivity if one does not scrupulously differentiate between structure and semantics.

The Cross-Check: Hieronymus Koeler's Travels

Maybe the most common failure of research on individuality is the treating of single texts and even isolated quotations as evidence for widespread sociological assumptions. For example: Thomas Platter's (1499-1582) account on how he became sad and anxious about the future when he left his home town is taken as an instance for the inner rupture of an individual on the margins of pre-modern 'heteronomy'.⁷⁰ Aside from all the highly distinctive arguments needed to prove a difference between Platter's sadness and modern emotion, this seems to be at odds with all heuristic guidelines: an isolated source taken from a variety of others without any explicit criteria will certainly attest to the thesis shaping the sample. There is no qualitative or quantitative evidence that this isolated account can prove anything except itself. And in fact, there is a lot of evidence for the contrary.

⁶⁸ OLEJNICZAK, "Heterologie", pp. 11-18; KORMANN, "Ich und Welt", pp. 6 f., 106 f., 300-302.

⁶⁹ This is also stated by scholars not adherent to Luhmann, e.g. O. ULLBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung: Individualität in Autobiographien", in: *Entdeckung des Ich*, pp. 109-144, at p. 111; JANCKE and ULBRICH, "Vom Individuum zur Person", p. 27; SAFLEY, "Personkonzepte", pp. 125 f.; KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Cf. for example ULLBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", pp. 139 f.

As a cross-check, one could read an autobiographical text from the sixteenth century as an example of a highly 'self-referential' individual, nearly meeting all the conditions postulated by sociological thinking: Hieronymus Koeler (1507-1573), citizen and later on councillor of the city of Nuremberg, wrote a family-chronicle or house book nearly typical in its shape and structure.⁷¹ Inserted in this, he gave an elaborate account of his journeys as a young man.⁷² This text more or less accords with the rules of contemporary travel-ogues, comprising lengthy descriptions of which way he went from A to B, whom he met there, what work he did and especially what clothes he wore. For about ten years Koeler travelled through all the countries favoured by the merchant companies of southern Germany. The future councillor lived and studied in Wittenberg for a while, travelled to Bohemia, the Netherlands, Burgundy, Italy, and Spain, working as a clerk, a stable groom, a sailor, and a mercenary. At last he signed on a ship of the famous Welser company, bound for Venezuela.

The typical experiences of a 'life-cycle-servant' show Hieronymus Koeler as an individual profoundly acting on his own. For ten years he tried his luck, with only a few contacts with his kin or peers. According to scholars of kinship structures, this specific phase of life between adolescence and marriage is typical of the Western European Middle Ages, characterised by a temporary change of residence, occupation and social reference group.⁷³ People often returned home afterwards, thus being reintegrated into their former networks. But quite as often they did not and settled where business had taken them to, thus changing from being strangers to being partners. That is to say, throughout the European Middle Ages young people did not necessarily grow into their ancestral social stratum; they frequently they went through a time of de-bonding and individual adventures.⁷⁴

In Hieronymus Koeler's memories these adventures become examples of the practical teaching of the readers: his descendants. Perilous situations are

⁷¹ H.S.M. AMBURGER, "Die Familiengeschichte der Koeler: Ein Beitrag zur Autobiographie des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 30 (1931), pp. 153-288.

⁷² "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, "Die Familiengeschichte", p. 213-246.

⁷³ M. MITTERAUER, *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs* (Munich, 2003), pp. 74-77, following Peter Laslett.

⁷⁴ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 167, n. 23, mentions the wide diffusion of apprenticeships especially in England, but ignores the fact that this meant not only a change of the household, but often a complete (though temporary) dissolution of social bonds.

depicted only to exemplify what to do if one experiences a similar danger. For example, in 1529, on his way back from Italy, he had to ride a very narrow track through the mountains:

Da zittert mir das hertz und gebein im leib, auch daß roß unter mir was zitternd. Zu solchem allem aber kam ich zu zweien beweglichen steghölzern, so uber eine klufft des gebirges, darunter dann ein rauschend abfallendes wasser war, darüber ich dann mit großer gefar muste reiten. ... Vor solchem verhiute sich meniglichen.

At that moment I shivered, and also my horse became anxious. Then I had to cross a deep canyon on the ground of which a waterfall rushed, over a small footbridge. That was very dangerous. Everybody should avoid situations like that.

The whole chapter is headed: “*Im raysen sich vor schmalen umbwegen und gemsensteigen zu hüeten*”⁷⁵ (“When travelling, how to avoid narrow detours and chamois paths”). The account of an emotional crisis is relevant primarily as practical knowledge for the descendants, not as part of an autobiographic reflection.

In 1531, when Hieronymus Koeler was about 24 years old and at home in Nuremberg for a while, people wondered whether he should get married. But, as he says, considering the threat by the Turks and rumours of future cataclysms, he decided that it was not yet time to marry, but instead to keep on travelling, to attend some other masters, to get to know things, to look around and learn:

*... begaben sich allerley bedenken und gewerb, auch hairat halber umb mich. Aber indem erhueb sich vil boeßes geschrays des erbfeindes, deß Türckenkriegs, und alhie kunftiges sterbensleuft, gedacht ich, das mein zeit zu hayraten noch nit wer, sondern vil mer zu wandern, herrn zu dienen, mer zu erfahren, sehen, lernen.*⁷⁶

... there were all kind of considerations and activities concerning myself, also marriage was an issue. But just then there was much rumour about the old enemy, the Turkish war, and about future dying around here, so I thought my time to get married had not yet come, rather I should go on travelling, to serve [other] masters, know, see, learn more.

⁷⁵ “Koeler”, ed. AMBURGER, pp. 218 f.

⁷⁶ “Koeler”, ed. AMBURGER, pp. 225 f.

In fact, anywhere he goes he can rely on a network of German merchants, sailors, and their friends. Thus, indeed, his account shows the young traveller being integrated into social relations. But this is by no means specifically pre-modern. And it is a typical feature of early modern travelogues and family chronicles as well, which were often first and foremost records and media of social networks.⁷⁷

As an individual, Hieronymus Koeler adapts to several different roles, and he does so very cleverly. Before the Welser's small armada leaves Spain, he changes his mind and after some deliberations with friends Hieronymus autonomously decides to leave the mercenary company before the ships cast off for South America:

*Da ich aber alle dück und untreu erfuer, gedacht ich, wie ein köstlich ding es wer, ... ein wenig zuhaus mit danksagung genossen, dan sich in solche große gefar zu begeben, in ein land, das nit gesunt, da auch weder zu trinken noch zu essen ist, ... auch da man die armen leut uberpoltert, erwürgt und inen das ir nympt, allein umb ein wenig schentliches goldes und silbers willen.*⁷⁸

But because I learned about all the tricks and infidelity, I considered that it would be amazing to go home instead of experiencing such great dangers, in such an unhealthy country, where there is no food and drink, ... where the poor get overwhelmed and choked and robbed, just for some nefarious gold and silver.

In 1993 the educationalist Erhard Wiersing described medieval individuality as being characterised by the divergence of social roles (fusing Arno Borst's term *Lebensformen* with the interactionist theory of 'role identity'), only covered by the 'soul' as the mediating centre.⁷⁹ For modernity, following Habermas and others, he postulated an absolute, autonomous I-identity. Hence, it would be easy to read Hieronymus Koeler's travelogue as a testimonial for Erhard Wiersing's concept, a model of individuation which is not that far away from that of

⁷⁷ Cf. G. ROHMANN, "mit seer grosser muhe vnd schreiben an ferre Ort": Wissensproduktion und Wissensvernetzung in der deutschsprachigen Familienbuchschreibung des 16. Jahrhunderts", in: *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. B. STUDDT (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2007: *Städteforschung A: Darstellungen* 69), pp. 87-120; S. TEUSCHER, "Familienerinnerungen, Beziehungsmanagement und politische Sprache in spätmittelalterlichen Städten", *Traverse* 2 (2002), pp. 53-64.

⁷⁸ "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, p. 240.

⁷⁹ E. WIERSING, "Überlegungen zum Problem mittelalterlicher Personalität", in: *Biographie als Geschichte*, ed. H. RÖCKELEIN (Tübingen, 1993: *Forum Psychohistorie* 1), pp. 184-218.

systems theory: the self in the centre, admittedly referring to God as the transcendental authority, but in no way to one single social group, adapts to the highly different roles it has to cope with. The only structural difference between Wiersing and Luhmann seems to be the replacement of the 'soul' (as a 'self' with transcendental reference) by the 'I' as the self-referential. But remember: Luhmann describes the modern individual as being role-centred, while Wiersing's concept is meant for medieval times. Thus, is Hieronymus Koeler, writing in the sixteenth century, extraordinarily modern, or is he a little old-fashioned, when concluding:

*Derhalben ein yeder junger gesell ein exempel und ebenpild nemen soll, das nit allein hie, sonder auch anderstwo gut brot essen ist, allein welcher Gott vor augen hat und sich darein zu schicken weiß.*⁸⁰

That is why every young fellow should learn that not only at home but also elsewhere there is a good life to live, if you have God on your mind and are able to adapt.

That does not mean that Erhard Wiersing is right and systems theory is wrong. Rather, we have to admit that the conception of 'role-identity' vs. 'I-identity' backing his thesis is deconstructed by postmodern theory as well.⁸¹ Each sociological model has to be proven as being representative for the particular time under investigation. If it turns out to be exchangeable with – even false – models, at least its explanatory value is called into question.

The Writing Self in Sixteenth-Century House Books

It is, in fact, God's commandment and anxiety about his salvation that makes Hieronymus Koeler pass the promising offer to join the journey to America:

Wir sind all wie das heu und blumen auf dem feld, so heut grünen und morgen verdorren. Derhalben wol vonnöten, ein yeder mensch recht und wol tue, auf sich selbs und acht hab, dan wol dem, so obsiget und mit freuden das end erreicht, nach dem unsere vorfaren gerungen, deren ich etlich hernach anzeigen wird,

⁸⁰ "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, p. 241.

⁸¹ ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 91-101.

*Ferner, dieweilm man die alten erbarn geschlecht vor augen erhebt, handhabt und in ehren erhalten tut, kompt daher, do Gott der herr spricht (Exod. 20): Ich bin der herr dein Gott, der uber die, so mich hassen, die sünde der vetter heimsucht an den kindern bis ins dritte und virde gelid, aber denen, so mich lieben und meine gepot- te halten, thue ich woll in taussendt gelid.*⁸²

We are all just like flowers in the field, blossom today and wither tomorrow. Hence everybody should do right, care for himself, so that he will win in the end and happily reach the goal for which our ancestors strived, some of whom I am going to mention a little later. Further on, that people look at the old, honourable lineages, is because of God's saying: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, but to them that love me and follow my commandments I do well unto thousand generations.

So Eva Kormann is certainly right in asserting that God was an eminent referent for individuation.⁸³ And Hieronymus Koeler in fact displays an elaborate theory on the hereditary, genealogical character of virtues and vices.⁸⁴ It is the individual who is responsible for his / her own life. But in this sixteenth-century burgher's account the lineage affects the eschatological considerations. The soul becomes part of a stratificatory – or rather segmentary – group.

Writing his own life story in the family chronicle became the decisive means for Hieronymus Koeler to make sure that his descendants would be able to continue the virtue of the lineage:

*Und das wir menschen alhie in diesem jammertalen anderst nit sind dann als die pilgram, immerdar von einem tuen und lasen und von einem ort zum anderen umbweberen, bis wir endlichen dahin kommen, da wir im himlischen leben ein immerwerende und bleibende statt haben, dessen zur gedechtnus will ich allen meinen nachkommenden zum furbild, etlicher meiner gestalt, kleidung und verwandlung, auch zum tail dienst und rays meiner jugend anzeigen, der hofnung, daraus gedult, erbarkeit und gutter sitten sich zu bevleißigen und dester besser gotsvorcht zu lernen.*⁸⁵

⁸² "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, pp. 205 f.

⁸³ KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*; ULLBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", p. 112.

⁸⁴ G. ROHMANN, *Das Ehrenbuch der Fugger: Darstellung – Transkription – Kommentar* (Augsburg, 2004: *Veröffentlichungen der Schwäbischen Forschungsgemeinschaft* IV, 30.1; *Studien zur Fuggergeschichte* 39.1), pp. 73 f.

⁸⁵ "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, p. 214.

And because we are all just pilgrims in this valley of tears, always running to and fro until we reach the eternal stability of heavenly life, I am going to show all my descendants what I looked like, my clothes and how they changed, my employments and travels as a young man, so that from my writings they can learn how to be patient, honourable and decent, and how to live in fear of God.

Writing on one's own life and business is thus a means to improve one's own and one's descendants' prospect of salvation. Hieronymus Koeler even addresses his writings to God and all the bearers of his name:

*Gott mach ims [!] zu einem lob und diejenigen [!], so dis namens sein und darinnen lessen, zu trost. Amen.*⁸⁶

I do it in praise of God and for those who bear my name and read it as a consolation, Amen.

Writing for the family provided authors with an opportunity to speak about themselves as 'I', that is: in the first person. As Hermann von Weinsberg from Cologne (1518-1597) writes:

*... dan ich sult gedain haben wie etliche, wilche ire eigene geschichten und handlungen ires lebens von in selbst in terciā persona gesatzet und ire rede dahin gewant, als hett es ein dritter ader ander van inen geschriben, so sei ire eigene sachen doch selbst personlich geschriben haben. Diss hab ich nit geacht und doch wol gedacht, darumb hab ich min rede in prima persona gebrucht und min eigen handlung und leben selbst von mir in die schrift gebracht. Dan ich hab allezeit im sinne gehatt diss boich uch zuzuschriben und zu vertrauwen, dergestalt, glich als redte ich von mir und den meinen zu uch allein als zu meinem groisten ungezweifelten frunde, darvor man sich nichtz dan alles goden zu versehen hett, ...*⁸⁷

Thus I could have done like many others who tell their own adventures in the third person, as if somebody else had written about it, while in fact they did it themselves. This, I thought, was not right, hence I wrote it all in the first person and recorded all my life and actions by myself. Because all the time I wanted to dedi-

⁸⁶ "Koeler", ed. AMBURGER, p. 252.

⁸⁷ *Das Buch Weinsberg: Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert*, 1, ed. K. HÖHLBAUM (Leipzig, 1886: *Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde* III, 1; repr. Düsseldorf, 2000), p. 5.

cate this book to you, as if I spoke about my life and my family to you alone as my closest friend, from whom one should expect nothing but good.

Speaking about oneself is legitimate within the intimate communication of the household, and to write about oneself is nothing else than a conversation with close relatives, or more precisely, than a diachronic dialogue of the actual householder with his successors to come. And even more, the future keepers of the position of the householder merge into one person, that means they have to know virtually everything about each other:

*Dieweil ir auch hausfatter zu Weinsberch und min erb sit, so ist uch diss boich neben den obben angezeigten ursachen auch hoich von noten, uff das ir daruis alle meine gelegenheit, meiner und des gansen haus vernemen und leren moigt Nachdem ir und ich und ich und ir eiz eins sin sullen und moissen als ein person, sovil das amt des hausfatters zu Weinsberch betrifft, darumb geburt uch pillich, alle min wille, beger, vurnehmen und hail zu wissen, wie ich selbs weis, wilchs ir uis dissem boich, wa nit all doch zum deil, spurren moigt*⁸⁸

Because you are also householder at Weinsberg and my heir, this book is highly necessary, so that you can learn everything about me, mine and the entire house. ... Hence you and me and me and you should be one and have to be one as one person, as far as the position of the householder of Weinsberg is concerned, therefore you should know all my wills and issues, as I know them myself, as you could detect partially, if not wholly, from this book.

Hermann von Weinsberg might have known Albrecht van Eyb's famous *Ehezuchtuechlein*, which features a concept of personal merging of father and son which is very close to his own one.⁸⁹ Here we have a concept of partial personhood dependent on the social role, because Hermann von Weinsberg explicitly states that this merging of two individuals in one 'person' only goes as far as the position of the head of the house is concerned. To know everything useful for his position meant that the father also had to know the most intimate secrets of his ancestor. He also confesses his vices and sins, thus in a way shifting his 'house book' into a kind of confessional autobiography.

Hermann von Weinsberg was in fact merely a small wine merchant (even if a learned *baccalaureus iuris*), whose efforts to establish a noble household ended in homicidal conflicts between his heirs. But in order to construct his

⁸⁸ *Das Buch Weinsberg*, ed. HÖHLBAUM, 1, pp. 10 f.

⁸⁹ *Albrecht van Eyb, Das Ehebüchlein*, trans. H. KÜMPER (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 32 f.

Haus Weinsberg by writing, he had to know the structures and rules of household life very well. His writings thus transport an ideal image of how a household book as a means of social reproduction might have worked.⁹⁰

It was the function as head of a household (be it a family, an institution, or a religious convent) that enabled people to write about themselves in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁹¹ In this sense, the ‘father’ is constitutive for the text. Speaking in the first person, as ‘I’, marked the authority of the patriarch to rule over his *familia*, to construct its history and to tell who was part of it and who was not.⁹² This becomes apparent if we draw on cases when the father of the house commissioned someone else to write the book, usually his son. This was the case with the above-mentioned Hieronymus Koeler in 1560. Yet it is not the son but the father who speaks as first-person narrator:

*Ich Jheronimus Köler genant, bürger, in Nürnberg geborn, hab dis buch aus alten briefen und büchern zesamen gelessen und getragen’.*⁹³

I, Hieronymus Koeler by name, burgher, born in Nuremberg, have compiled this book from letters and scriptures of old.

In 1546 Joachim Moller in Hamburg entrusted his son Joachim the Younger to write his *Slechtbok* (‘lineage book’). The young man carefully recorded this:

*Tho wetende, dat ick, Joachim Moller de Junger, dut nabeschreven van der Herkumpst mines vaders vnd miner moder vnd ehres geschlechtes, vth bevele mines vaders vth sinen schriffen, de he mit siner hand getekent, geschreven hebbe.*⁹⁴

⁹⁰ B. STUDDT, “Der Hausvater: Haus und Gedächtnis bei Hermann von Weinsberg”, *Rheinische Geschichtsblätter* 61 (1997), pp. 135–160; G. ROHMANN, “Der Lügner durchschaut die Wahrheit: Verwandtschaft, Status und historisches Wissen bei Hermann von Weinsberg”, *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 71 (2000), pp. 43–76.

⁹¹ G. JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2002: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 10), pp. 198 ff., generalises the ‘house’ as audience and reference, which seems to blur the analytical differences between a kin group, a ‘familia’ (household), a religious convent and the like; KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, pp. 13 f, 254 f.; KORMANN, “Ich und Welt”, pp. 103 ff.

⁹² ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 156–160.

⁹³ “Koeler”, ed. AMBURGER, p. 252; cf. ROHMANN, “Wissensproduktion und Wissensvernetzung”, pp. 118 f.

⁹⁴ *Dat Slechtbok: Geschlechtsregister der hamburgischen Familie Moller (vom Hirsch)*,

To make known that I, Joachim Moller jr., have written the following on my father's and my mother's ancestry and lineage, by order of my father from his writings that he had done by himself.

But in the current text written by the son it is the elder Joachim who speaks as 'I'. As in other family books, the first person narrator does not mark the factual writer or composer but the sponsor.⁹⁵ In the case of the Mollers this pattern is not used consistently, which makes it even more articulate. And there is a third 'I' speaking in their text: when in 1612 Johannes Moller, grandson of the elder Joachim and nephew of the younger, continued the *Slechtbok*, he related on himself in the third person, thus honouring the authority of his grandfather. But mentioning his own second marriage he lapses into an exceptionally empathetic blessing:

*Der Almechtige wolle glück heil vnd langes leben, neben allen zeitlichen vnd ewigen wolfardt, zu solch andern ehe verleihen.*⁹⁶

The Almighty gave luck, salvation and a long life, besides all temporary and eternal welfare, to this second marriage.

And twice at least he uses the first person to mark his own kin position: "*dazu ich Gefatter*"⁹⁷ ("to whom I am Godfather").

The 'I' can change even within one and the same sentence, as with the Frankfurt patrician Bernhard Rohrbach, who copied his father's genealogical records:

*Anno XIIIc XLVI uf den XI tag februarii und waß uf ein fritag vor dem sundag septuagesima, des nachtes, als iß X slug, wart min sone Bernhart der lest geborn, das bin ich selber.*⁹⁸

verfasst im Jahr 1561 von Joachim Moller, Ratmann. Mit Nachträgen bis 1612, sowie mit urkundlichen Beilagen, ed. O. BENEKE (Hamburg, 1876), p. 1; cf. ROHMANN, "'mit seer grosser muhe vnd schreiben an ferre Ort'", pp. 98-104; ID., "Chroniques urbaines et registres de famille dans les villes allemandes du XV^e au XVII^e siècle: Comparaison entre Augsbourg et Hambourg", *Histoire urbaine* No. 28 (2010), pp. 17-44.

⁹⁵ ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 147 f., 195-201.

⁹⁶ *Dat Slechtbok*, ed. BENEKE, p. 69.

⁹⁷ *Dat Slechtbok*, ed. BENEKE, p. 71, cf. p. 59.

⁹⁸ Quoted after: U.M. ZAHND, *Die autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Ludwig von Diesbachs: Studien zur spätmittelalterlichen Selbstdarstellung im oberdeutschen und schweizerischen Raum* (Bern, 1986: *Schriften der Berner Burgerbibliothek*), p. 333.

Anno 1446 on 11 February, at night, when the bell rang ten o'clock, my last son Bernhart was born, that is me.

Only where he himself and his descendants are concerned, the son is allowed to speak authoritatively as a first person narrator. That is why the younger Joachim Moller in Hamburg explicitly expressed his father's appointment to legitimise himself for writing a house book long before being a householder himself. Therefore, later continuators and copyists of family books scrupulously respected the writings of their predecessors. As the Nuremberg town-clerk Lazarus Spengler put it:

*... wie ich dann solches auß gemellts meines vatters seligen verzeichnus seiner eigen hannedschriff von wort zu wort, wie er das selbs auffgeschriben hat, hierzu gepracht hab.*⁹⁹

... how I put it all together from my father's own scriptures word for word, as he wrote it himself.

In the following Hermann von Weinsberg explains how and why he came to write his *Buch Weinsberg*:

*A[nno] 1544 ... habe ich mich erstlich understanden darnach zu denken und zu trachten, wie das haus Weinsberch zu funderen und zu bestiften were, das alle zeit ein erlich haushaltung da worde gehalten, das es auch ... bei mines fatters leibserben, geblode und nachkomenheit zu ewigen zeiten mogt bleiben.*¹⁰⁰

Anno 1544 I first considered how to found the Weinsberg house, so that an honourable household would be carried out there, so that it would adhere to my father's heirs, blood and descendants for eternity.

He took the noble houses with their foundations as a model for himself. And it was the position of the patron who by his trust established a long-term core for his house and its continuation. He established the *memoria* of himself and of his house, and as a person – in life and after death – he stood for its stability. Exactly in this sense family books from Augsburg call the author or sponsor *fundator*, that is: 'founder'. The book written and conveyed within the

⁹⁹ Quoted after: H. SAHM, *Dürers kleinere Texte: Konventionen als Spielraum für Individualität* (Tübingen, 2002: *Hermeia Reihe*), p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ *Buch Weinsberg*, ed. HÖHLBAUM, 1, p. 220.

house is first and foremost a medium of *memoria*. And the householder is the one to provide a suitable *memoria* for his people.¹⁰¹

As is well known since Alfred Rein and Georg Misch, in house books from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries there is a wide range in the degree to which authors related to themselves. Often they almost completely merge into the collective, in other cases they insert discrete ‘self-testimony’ into their account, like Hieronymus Koeler, or inseparably mingle family and self. In many cases writers only slightly or never allude to their families and focus on their own lives and adventures instead.¹⁰² But even these writers almost always refer to their houses, meaning in most cases their descendants, as required consignees of their narrative. For example, the Alsatian craftsman Augustin Güntzer writes, as late as 1657:

*Ich habe es nicht geschriben zume Pracht oder auß Fihrwitz, daß viell leidt lessen sollen, sonder nuhr allein die meinigen hinderlaßen Erben, darin sie sehen, wie ich mein armes sindliches Leben mit Angst undt [Not] zugepracht habe auff Erden.*¹⁰³

I did not write it for splendour or because of vanity, so that many people should read it, but just in order to let my heirs see how I lived a sinner’s life on earth in fear and grief.

Güntzer had a very special aim: to justify his economic failure towards his heirs, hence his case might seem not that striking. But evidence for this observation is vast, which does not mean that no one else came to read the father’s writings, because house books circulated within kin and peer networks.¹⁰⁴ But the descendants as the potential audience provided the author with legitimacy for his work. Even Michel de Montaigne used this pattern to justify his writings in the prologue to the *Essais*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 110-118, 207-215.

¹⁰² With further references: ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 133-140.

¹⁰³ Augustin Güntzer, *Kleines Biechlein von meinem gantzen Leben: Die Autobiographie eines Elsässer Kannengießers aus dem 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. F. BRÄNDLE and D. SIEBER (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2002: *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 8), p. 80; cf. JANCKE and ULBRICH, “Vom Individuum zur Person”, pp. 18-20.

¹⁰⁴ ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 142-156; ROHMANN, “Wissensproduktion und Wissensvernetzung”; JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis*, pp. 198 ff.; KORMANN, “Ich und Welt”, pp. 105 f.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *supra*, n. 1.

Other than that, the Augsburg humanist Hieronymus Wolf (1516-1580) stated that ancestors and family did not matter at all for his savant self-conception.¹⁰⁶ In the second half of the sixteenth century these 'self-referential' semantics were a minority phenomenon, but their mere existence might prevent us from one-dimensional reasoning. Because for most of Wolf's contemporaries the house provided a space in which writing about oneself could evolve and could be legitimised by drawing on the father's liability for the *memoria* – be it the religious care for salvation, the profane genealogical knowledge, the transfer of pragmatic skills or the reproduction of social networks. And if we take this seriously, we have to conclude that late medieval and early modern *Selbstzeugnisse*, as far as they emerge from the context of household keeping, are marked by a specific writing situation. If the house as the setting for the development of the *Selbstzeugnis* is not accidental, then the latter should be regarded as an expression of collective remembrance. And furthermore: the house, primarily if it is a kin group, is not a given precondition for the father's writings. But only by his writings the author constructs his house as a group structured by a particular social matrix, with a history common to all its members and an affiliation going back to a common ancestor. The 'I' of the house book is not an autobiographical first-person but the head of a house marking the position to authoritatively address the members of the house.¹⁰⁷ As in the cases of Joachim Moller in Hamburg or Hermann von Weinsberg in Cologne, he does not only record but in fact produces a genealogical series with his Ego as the focal point of the construction. Fathers – Moller successfully, Weinsberg tragically – tried to adjust the traditional bilateral kinship structure of the later Middle Ages to the new agnatic, patrilineal fashion of the sixteenth century. Like autobiographical writing, family history does not merely document but retrospectively construes its subject. Kinship is not a traditional structure from which the writing of the father emerges, but only an artefact of this scriptural practice.

And vice versa: the writer of a house book himself used writing as a medium to achieve the social role of a father, of a householder. This is easily discernible where inner conflicts shook families, as in the case of the Fuggers in Augsburg. It was not the famous Anton Fugger but his nephew Hans Jakob, who, in roughly 1542, commissioned an *Ehrenbuch*, thus claiming the status of a senior of the descendants of his father Raymund, whom Anton was held to

¹⁰⁶ ULLBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", p. 121.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. generally: KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, pp. 248-297.

have pushed out of his role as *primogenitus*.¹⁰⁸ Hence, 'individuation' here means taking the position to design not an individual but a collective.

At a first glance, all this fits very well with recent scholarship on early modern 'self-testimony'. Gabriele Jancke has ascertained that autobiographical writing was a mode of social practice, something which is done in the context of social relations.¹⁰⁹ But we have to go further: we are not concerned with autobiographical writing accidentally integrated into house books or family chronicles, or even more with literal 'autobiographies',¹¹⁰ but with speaking about oneself within the realm of collective memory. There is no 'autobiographical pact' in house books, but the reciprocity of collective remembrance.

Research on autobiographical writing usually takes house books merely as a subspecies of the genre *Selbstzeugnis*.¹¹¹ This analytical category, one has to bear in mind, is characterised by only one criterion: there has to be someone writing about him / herself. And this criterion is inductive, meaning that it is defined by a modern, scholarly way of perception.¹¹² Even the house book as a genre is, in a way. But it is constituted by many more and much narrower criteria. 'Self-testimony' is a category necessarily weak in definition. 'House book' is far from being clearly defined, but is at least a stronger category.¹¹³ And in fact, Hermann von Weinsberg proves that the concept of the 'house book' was well known to sixteenth century people:

*Und wanne das man diss gedenkboich recht ansehen und erwegen will, was ist es dan vil anders dan liber domesticus seu familiaris, dan ein hauslich, broderlich und fruntlich gedenkboich ...*¹¹⁴

And if one considers this memory book, what else could it be than a *liber domesticus seu familiaris*, than a domestic, brotherly and friendly memorial.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. ROHMANN, *Ehrenbuch der Fugger*, pp. 31-38.

¹⁰⁹ JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis*, pp. 187 ff.

¹¹⁰ E.g. ULLBRICHT, "Ich-Erfahrung", p. 118-123.

¹¹¹ E. SCHLOTHEUBER, "Norm und Innerlichkeit: Zur problematischen Suche nach den Anfängen der Individualität", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 31 (2004), pp. 329-357, at pp. 332-334; KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, pp. 16 f., in her survey explicitly differentiates between autobiographic writing, monasterial chronicle and family chronicle.

¹¹² Cf. KORMANN, *Ich, Welt und Gott*, pp. 9 f., 96 f.

¹¹³ Cf. SCHMOLINSKY, "Selbstzeugnisse finden", pp. 41 f.

¹¹⁴ *Buch Weinsberg*, ed. HÖHLBAUM, 1, p. 5.

Writing for and about the house was a contemporary genre with particular characteristics. Taking ‘house books’ only as a subspecies of ‘self-testimony’ means ignoring their specific structures. In fact, this is true for all forms of writing categorised as ‘self-testimony’ or ‘autobiographical writing’. These concepts were not in the minds of the authors when they were writing, whereas the concept of the ‘house book’ was. So we have to consider their texts as belonging to the particular typological frameworks of their time. It is not accidental that the majority of the people writing on themselves did so within the framework of kinship. Within the house and its structures of remembrance, place the need for justification and deliberations of the self had their space. And within the medium of scripture these relations between person and kinship could be worked out. Thus ‘house books’ mark a point where individuality, kinship and scripturality concurred.

Between Segmentary and Stratificatory Differentiation

As early as 1929 Alfons Dopsch assumed that, contrary to the prevailing image, the early Middle Ages must have been a period of highly individualised subjects who became constrained by the rise of urban life, confraternities and other forms of collective bonding from the higher Middle Ages onwards. Dopsch traced this individuality back to Germanic roots, which is certainly inaccurate.¹¹⁵ Rather, as Otto Gerhard Oexle depicted, with the decline of Roman administration contractuality and confraternity as principles of social organisation prevailed just because individuals needed new mechanisms of settling conflicts and structuring communication and exchange.¹¹⁶ According to Oexle, these principles even shaped theological thinking.

Others pointed to the charismatic and anti-societal traits of Christianity,¹¹⁷ especially Augustinian ethics, as a basis for the pronounced subjectivity specific for Western Europe.¹¹⁸ It is Christianity that fostered the individual, because by baptism every single person as such is taken into a relationship with

¹¹⁵ DOPSCH, “Wirtschaftsgeist und Individualismus”.

¹¹⁶ OEXLE, “Konsens – Vertrag – Individuum”, p. 35; interestingly enough, even LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, pp. 155 ff., states that primitive societies are highly orientated at individuals.

¹¹⁷ A. KOSCHORKE, *Die heilige Familie und ihre Folgen: Ein Versuch* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000).

¹¹⁸ SCHMOLINSKY, “Selbstzeugnisse finden”, pp. 27 f.; VON MOOS, “Einleitung”, pp. 1–42.

God.¹¹⁹ As a distinctive individual the Christian has to give account on Judgment Day. As a distinctive individual she or he has to confess, as a distinctive individual she or he has to be remembered by their fellow Christians to gain salvation.¹²⁰

According to Michael Mitterauer, this specific Christian individualism was one eminent reason for the weakening of kinship structures since late Antiquity because, following recent research on kinship in European history, medieval society was not characterised by strong blood relations, but on the contrary by different factors that strengthened the individual and competing social bonds, mainly the spiritual associations of the *Ecclesia*.¹²¹ Maybe by a comparative approach one could generalise that all salvation religions of Late Antiquity tended to foster the individual and displaced clan and lineage as the addressee. However, Karl-Heinz Ohlig emphasised that because of the impact of Augustinian thought, especially Western, Latin Christianity developed this specific negation of kinship and preference for the individual.¹²²

That is to say that recent research on medieval society conveys exactly the antipode to the model still widely assumed in debates on the ‘discovery of the individual’ and also in the systems theory approach to individuation and differentiation. Kinship in early modern times is not an archaic, traditional structure the individual has to get rid of in order to become modern. And individualism is not a product of de-Christianisation but an offspring of the medieval implementation of Christian norms.

Only from the fifteenth century onwards can we detect a new growth of kinship relations, not only among social elites like the emerging feudal nobility or the urban lineages, but also in the middle strata. This new prosperity of

¹¹⁹ A. PROSPERI, “Battesimo e identità tra medio evo e prima età moderna”, in: *Unverwechselbarkeit*, pp. 325-354.

¹²⁰ P. VON MOOS, “L’individu ou les limites de l’institution ecclésiale”, in: *L’individu au Moyen Âge*, pp. 271-288, points out that Georg Simmel, Max Weber and Louis Dumont already ascertained the eschatological basis of individuality. Von Moos implies that only from the twelfth century onwards the development of scholastic ethics led to a new emphasis on the individual, explicitly connecting this with Luhmann’s shift from inclusion to exclusion. But had not baptism and Augustinian anthropology existed for about 800 years then? Thus, if the conflicts between Papalist institutionalism and conciliarist communitarianism of the fourteenth century (VON MOOS, *ibid.*, pp. 283-288) could be explained with reference to the increasing complexity of society and Church, and if the scholastic emphasis on intentionality fostered an internalisation of social discipline, it was a very traditional idea that experienced a revival then.

¹²¹ MITTERAUER, *Warum Europa?*, esp. pp. 83 ff.

¹²² K.-H. OHLIG, “Christentum – Individuum – Kirche”, in: *Entdeckung des Ich*, pp. 7-40, at pp. 14-17, 21; against this: MITTERAUER, *Warum Europa?*, p. 92.

vertical, agnatic and patrilineal structures covering several generations is expressed and mediated by new ways of writing. Because after about one thousand years of ecclesiastical efforts to deprive the kin groups of the duties of *memoria*, in the later Middle Ages remembrance once again became a special task for the relatives. The boom of house books is to be understood as part of this development.¹²³ And house book writing is by no means reserved to feudal or patrician elites, but is a genre often used by craftsmen, merchants, parsons or academics.

As Natalie Zemon Davis has ascertained, the sixteenth-century discovery of the individual happened within group relations.¹²⁴ But why did people seldom write about themselves in the context of guilds or confraternities, and more frequently in the context of household and kin? Maybe the newly structured space of confidential communication between relatives adopted ways of self-reflection that had previously been oriented to confession. The author's 'I' and his family emerge in the course of the same process. This deliberation of the self in terms of domestic remembrance has to be considered to have been fostered by group relations. It is, in fact, 'heterologous'. But this was by no means the only way to individuate, because there were of course many persons who did not write or even read a house book. But maybe the house book stands for a much more widespread paradigm.

On the macroscopic, synoptical level kinship can thus be labelled a catalyst of individuation. But, admittedly, 'catalyst' in its chemical sense is not the right term, because it denotes a factor fostering the change of another without itself being changed – and that is exactly not what I wanted to say. Rather, further research would have to scrutinise how specific modes of individuation and the re-emergence of kinship interrelated as a structuring factor of society, how individuation also altered the families. For example, Luhmann assumed that the increase of privacy and intimacy from the eighteenth century onwards was a reaction by the house and the family respectively in their failure to include the new *Exklusionsindividuum*.¹²⁵ Thus, maybe the early modern return of kinship ties is precisely a consequence of the shift to exclusion individuality. Then stratificatory society would be not the background but the genuine stage of modernisation.

¹²³ ROHMANN, *Clemens Jäger*, pp. 91-122.

¹²⁴ N.Z. DAVIS, "Bindung und Freiheit", in: EAD., *Frauen und Gesellschaft am Beginn der Neuzeit*, 2nd edn. (Frankfurt am Main, 1989).

¹²⁵ LUHMANN, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3, p. 169.

Compared to that, we would have to consider the Middle Ages to have been a long in-between period, with a mode of social differentiation all of its own. These Middle Ages could best be labelled as 'post-segmentary' and 'pre-stratificatory'. After the end of ancient segmentary society, triggered by Christianity and the decline of the Roman state, and before the victory of stratification, which was a means of early modern state-building, there was a time when the person was included, indeed, not into primordial social groups but into the transcendental relation with God as it was mediated by the *Ecclesia*. From the later Middle Ages onwards, social strata and kinship bonds came to superimpose this religious inclusion and thus to emancipate the subject from God. Kinship was not the obstacle to, but the medium of early modern individuation. And this individuation, on the level of semantics, was not less hetero-referential, but even more. Its medieval prequel, on the contrary, was less group-referential, less collectivist, and hetero-referential primarily in its religious basis.

That does not mean that all Europeans in the Middle Ages believed in the Christian God. There are even house fathers writing house books who, in their writings at least, show a significant lack of transcendental reference. But without doubt the socially prevalent model was Christian. Non-believers had to face exclusion, even if more on the semantic than on the structural level. The transcendental reference kept on working in this kin-related individuality for a long time. In some milieus of modern society it has doubtlessly lost its impact, in others not. Hence we can at best speak of a successive decline of the transcendental reference – and that could be sort of emancipation, indeed.

This change seems to have been prepared during the Middle Ages by a gradually growing interest in categories of stratification. To use Luhmann's own terms: the change of the social structure that can be detected only from the fifteenth century onwards was possibly prepared by developments happening much earlier on the level of semantics. Therefore, when considering the stratificatory society of the Middle Ages, adherents of systems theory perhaps confuse semantics and structure. Anyway, in order to do justice to Luhmann's work, we do not have to defend its orthodoxy, but to reconsider it time and again. What we need is to scrutinise the development described by Luhmann precisely in diachronic perspective: When and in which ways did the stratificatory logic emerge on the level of semantics? How did semantics and social structure interact, so that the stratificatory logic could become the dominant model of understanding society? When and in which ways did the stratificatory logic begin to shape the 'generalised expectations', that is: social structure?

Following David Sabeen and Simon Teuscher, we have to attest a strong decline of kinship only in the twentieth century. But it is not ‘self-reference’ that takes its part, but the reference to other groups and social norms. And maybe this is also only about semantics, and – as far as the structural level is concerned – Luhmann is right:

Autopoietic systems reproduce themselves; they continue their reproduction or not. This makes them individuals. And there is nothing more to say.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ LUHMANN, “The individuality of the individual”, p. 325.

Me, Myself, and My Name: Naming and Identity in the Late Middle Ages*

CHRISTOF ROLKER

It is to be regretted, that the proper names of individuals are upon so irregular a footing. Those distinctions, invented in the infancy of society, to provide for the wants of a hamlet, only imperfectly accomplish their object in a great nation.¹

Jeremy Bentham († 1832), lamenting the “nominal confusion” of his days, proposed as a remedy “a new nomenclature ... so arranged, that, in a whole nation, every individual should have a proper name, which should belong to him alone”. Indeed, Bentham went on, it would be even better to adopt the “common custom among English sailors, of printing their family and Christian names upon their wrists, in well-formed and indelible characters”.

One and only one name for every individual, exclusively designating this person, on whose body it would be tattooed – this idea sounds familiar given present-day debates, be it on the introduction of ID cards in England, recent

* The following text was finished in early 2011. For a fuller and more recent account, see now C. ROLKER, *Das Spiel der Namen: Familie, Verwandtschaft und Geschlecht im spätmittelalterlichen Konstanz* (Ostfildern, 2014: *Konstanzer Geschichts- und Rechtsquellen* 45).

¹ *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. J. BOWRING, 11 vols. (Edinburgh, 1843), 2, p. 557.

German jurisdiction on family names or the uses of biometry. Personally, we may find Bentham's ideas frightening – and yet, as historians we may secretly wish that the nomenclature in our sources were remotely as clear as the one he proposed. Both homonymy (names shared by many people) and name changes (persons with many names) can render life difficult for the historian. And yet, as I want to argue in the present article, precisely these phenomena are highly relevant for the historian interested in pre-modern individuality.

My approach to 'individual identity' and to 'social groups' here is inspired by recent research into practices of representation. While 'representation' had traditionally been linked to elaborate narrative, in particular in the form of autobiography or family chronicles, scholars have recently begun to take into account non-verbal forms of representation as well. At the same time, medieval historians have asserted the fundamental role of sign systems both for the constitution of social groups – “no kinship without representation”² – and for individual identity.³ The signs 'representing' individuals and groups (often both at the same time) are manifold: given names, surnames, seals, coats of arms, notary signs, signatures, trade marks, clothing, hair cuts, scars, pilgrim badges, jewellery, They do represent the individual not because they are 'unique' (what they normally are not) but because they both help to single out the individual *and* to locate him or her within a certain social context.

Both aspects of the name have to do with individual identity. As they are used by the community of speakers to refer to the same person again and again, names are an important means of any attribution of acts to a given actor, and this can rightly be described as the most fundamental aspect for the formation of individuality. Evidently, 'having a name' in this context means being referred to by the same name over an extended period of time. Yet this very stability of the name leads to a first paradox: while the name is necessarily stable at least to some extent, the process of identity formation is dynamic. In other words, the person will change, but the name will not. Therefore, the

² J. Morsel, “Geschlecht und Repräsentation: Beobachtungen zur Verwandtschaftskonstruktion im fränkischen Adel des späten Mittelalters”, in: *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen: Texte – Bilder – Objekte*, ed. O.G. OEXLE and A. VON HÜLSEN-ESCH (Göttingen, 1998: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte* 141), pp. 259-325. In general, cf. O.G. OEXLE, “Soziale Gruppen in der Ständegesellschaft”, in: *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen*, pp. 9-44.

³ P. VON MOOS, “Einleitung: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation vor der Moderne: Zum Wechselspiel von sozialer Zuschreibung und Selbstbeschreibung”, in: *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*, ed. P. VON MOOS (Cologne, 2004: *Norm und Struktur* 23), pp. 1-42; M. RUBIN, “Identities”, in: *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, ed. R. HORROX and W.M. ORMROD (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 383-412.

stability of a name can be described as being illusionary; for the same reason it can be seen (as Bourdieu has argued) as being normative in the sense that it asserts and indeed demands the identity of the one named over time.⁴ As will be argued in detail below, multiple and changing names, for the very reason that they seemingly violate the logic of identification, are of particular interest for the historian.

The second aspect of the name concerns the social aspect of acts of naming. Just as the act of naming is an entry into human society, specific groups can use particular forms of naming to receive group members. In particular, many groups do use shared or similar names for all their members. These practices are found with many groups, ranging from families sharing a surname to nations with 'typical' names. Indeed, the same can be said of other techniques of identification by other sign systems already quoted above. To mention only some recent medieval scholarship, studies on heraldic signs,⁵ seals,⁶ and clothing⁷ have taken a similar approach to 'shared' signs of representation. Again, the use of multiple signs – in our case, names – calls for special attention. Different names may express different affiliations, either consecutively or simultaneously, and the choice between several names may be linked to the assumption of different roles.

In a nutshell, this is the concept underlying my current research project on late medieval naming practices.⁸ In the present article I shall employ this approach to test empirically some implications of Luhmann's concept of pre-modern individuality. At the core of his concept there is the assumption of a

⁴ P. BOURDIEU, "L'illusion biographique", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62-63 (1986), pp. 69-72.

⁵ W. PARAVICINI, "Gruppe und Person: Repräsentation durch Wappen im späteren Mittelalter", in: *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen*, pp. 327-389; M. PASTOUREAU, *Une histoire symbolique du Moyen Âge occidental* (Paris, 2004).

⁶ B.M. BEDOS-REZAK, "Medieval identity: A sign and a concept", *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), pp. 1489-1533; C. JUDGE DE LA RIVIÈRE, "Du sceau au passeport: Genèse des pratiques médiévales de l'identification", in: *L'identification: Genèse d'un travail d'État*, ed. G. NOIRIEL (Paris, 2007), pp. 57-78.

⁷ P. VON MOOS, "Das mittelalterliche Kleid als Identitätssymbol und Identifikationsmittel", in: *Unverwechselbarkeit*, pp. 123-146; F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "Gesten, Kleidung und die Etablierung von Diskursräumen im städtischen Gerichtswesen (1350 bis 1650)", in *Kommunikation und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. J. BURKHARDT and C. WERKSTETTER (Munich, 2005: *Historische Zeitschrift, Beihefte*, N.F. 41), pp. 461-498; C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), pp. 95-125.

⁸ For the project, now finished, see ROLKER, *Spiel der Namen*. An English abstract of the research project is found here: <http://www.exc16.de/cms/284.html?&L=1>.

marked difference between modern and pre-modern individuality.⁹ Contrary to other models, however, this is a claim concerning the modes of individuality, not its existence or non-existence (or its 'birth'). The crucial difference, according to Luhmann, is the change from individuality determined by 'inclusion' to the 'exclusion' of the individual. While in modern societies even the strongest group allegiances only offer (or expect) the individual to participate in certain roles but exclude the 'whole' persona, according to Luhmann pre-modern social groups, above all the family, include the 'whole' persona.¹⁰ Persons may belong to more than one group, but the inclusion in the (household) family was fundamental in the sense that it affected the place of the individual in very many systems (religion, economy, etc.). In this sense, Luhmann claimed, people were born into 'estates' or 'orders' (*Stände*), which determined their individuality by assigning them a position in spheres that in modern societies tend to be separate. Legal status in the medieval city, for example, was tied to economic, religious and moral conditions, while modern society has not only extended citizenship in a quantitative sense but has also done so by largely detaching it from the question of economic power, religious affiliation or moral behaviour.

Quite independent of the intellectual challenge Luhmann's work presents to any reader, medievalists face particular problems when being confronted with this model. As medievalists, they often feel uncomfortable with Luhmann's description of pre-modern society as being stratified and structured by 'estates' one was born into.¹¹ On the one hand, this vocabulary is all too familiar from pre-modern (including medieval) normative sources, yet on the other hand it is hardly the preferred analytical vocabulary – at least not any more, one should add. In several fields of medieval history recent research has indeed produced findings that run counter to the historiography Luhmann was relying on. This is particularly true for studies on the medieval nobility and the family. As Luhmann readily confessed, his model would be seriously called into ques-

⁹ N. LUHMANN, "The Individuality of the individual: Historical meanings and contemporary problems", in: *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T.C. HELLER *et al.* (Stanford, CA, 1986), pp. 313-335; ID., "Inklusion und Exklusion", in: ID., *Soziologische Aufklärung*, 6, *Die Soziologie und der Mensch* (Opladen, 2005), pp. 226-251.

¹⁰ N. LUHMANN, "Mein 'Mittelalter'", *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 10 (1991), pp. 66-70; cf. BOHN, *Inklusion*, p. 55.

¹¹ O.G. OEXLE, "Luhmanns Mittelalter: Rezension zu N. Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, Bd. 3", *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 10 (1991), pp. 53-66.

tion if the 'nobility' as he perceived it could not be taken for granted for the Middle Ages;¹² hence, the idea that the nobility emerged only towards the very end of the medieval period can be expected seriously to challenge Luhmann's model.¹³ Recent research into the medieval family also calls into question many of Luhmann's assumptions in this field. Following the lead of anthropological studies of the 1970s and 1980s, medievalists have come to emphasise how the various forms of 'kinship' (e.g. spiritual kinship) and the medieval concept of marriage weakened affiliations based on descent.¹⁴ More generally, for a long time now medieval historians have highlighted the importance for medieval society of social groups constituted by oath rather than birth. Medievalists have quoted the latter findings in a direct response to Luhmann,¹⁵ as they have pointed out the importance of Christian semantics of inclusion stressing equality before God.¹⁶

These are important points that have to be raised given Luhmann's oversimplified depiction of medieval society and family. Indeed, it is evident that Luhmann often fell prey to a general tendency of historical research, that of overestimating the importance of kinship solidarity for pre-modern societies

¹² LUHMANN, 'Mein "Mittelalter"', p. 67.

¹³ J. MORSEL, "Inventing a social category; The sociogenesis of the nobility at the end of the Middle Ages", in: *Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on Intellectual and Practical Modes of Shaping Social Relations*, ed. B. JUSSEN (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 200-240; ID., *L'aristocratie médiévale: La domination sociale en Occident (V^e-XV^e siècle)* (Paris, 2004); O.G. OEXLE, "Perceiving social reality in the early and high Middle Ages: The sociogenesis of the nobility at the end of the Middle Ages", in: *Ordering Medieval Society*, pp. 92-143; ID., "Konsens – Vertrag – Individuum", in: *Das Individuum und die Seinen: Individualität in der okzidentalen und der russischen Kultur in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. J.L. BESSMERTNYJ and O.G. OEXLE (Göttingen, 2001: *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte* 163), pp. 15-37.

¹⁴ M. MITTERAUER, "Mittelalter", in: *Geschichte der Familie*, ed. A. GESTRICH et al. (Stuttgart, 2003), pp. 160-363; ID., *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs* (Munich, 2003), ch. 3.

¹⁵ OEXLE, "Luhmanns Mittelalter"; ID., "Gilde und Kommune: Über die Entstehung von 'Einung' und 'Gemeinde' als Grundformen des Zusammenlebens in Europa", in: *Theorien kommunaler Ordnung in Europa*, ed. P. BLICKLE (Munich, 1996: *Schriften des Historischen Kollegs: Kolloquien* 36), pp. 75-97.

¹⁶ P. VON MOOS, "Vom Inklusionsindividuum zum Exklusionsindividuum: Persönliche Identität in Mittelalter und Moderne", in: *Processi di inclusione ed esclusione – Prozesse der Inklusion und Exklusion: Identität und Abgrenzung*, ed. C. BOHN and A. HAHN (Berlin, 2006 = *Annali di sociologia* 16 (2002-2003)), pp. 252-265; A. HAHN and C. BOHN, "Partizipative Identität, Selbstexklusion und Mönchtum", in: *Das Eigene und das Ganze: Zum Individuellen im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, ed. G. MELVILLE and M. SCHÜRER (Münster, 2002: *Vita regularis* 16), pp. 3-25.

and underestimating it for modern society.¹⁷ It is therefore a dated scholarly consensus of their own discipline rather than Luhmann's model as such that historians are mainly offended by. Furthermore, while Luhmann may have exaggerated the importance of kinship relations for pre-modern societies, one should not fall into the other extreme. In medieval Europe kin was omnipresent: family relations mattered in all possible spheres (politics, economy, religion etc.), and almost all meaningful social relations were described in kinship terminology ('god-siblings', brotherhoods etc.). For this very reason, however, it is necessary not only to consider the importance of 'the family' as being opposed to other groups and corporations, but also to consider family structure and the constitution of 'the family' in the Middle Ages. Again, medievalists looking at Luhmann's work may feel uncomfortable with the dated view of kinship structure it conveys. Nonetheless, this reliance on a now dated scholarly consensus has to be ignored for any fruitful debate on Luhmann's concepts.

In the present article the focus is on late medieval naming practices, in particular the use of the 'family name' or surname (both terms will be used synonymously), defined as a name separate from the given name shared by several family members and commonly inherited from one's parents. The use and non-use of such names can be seen, in Luhmann's terms, as structuring communication. To give a very simple example, using one's surname (only) in official contexts and given names only in colloquial situations are communicative acts structuring the respective situation, in the sense that the situation becomes 'official' or 'colloquial' by people addressing each other or introducing themselves by one name or the other. Given Luhmann's assertions on the inclusion of the individual into 'estates' by inclusion into 'families', I will look at differences in naming in different social groups. In addition, the family name presents itself as a form of expressing 'inclusion' into the family. The focus will be on naming practices that can be linked to the assumption of specific roles and / or multiple allegiances. According to Luhmann, affiliation to multiple groups in pre-modern society was possible only as long as it did not question the 'primary' distinction according to 'estates'.¹⁸ Hence, naming practices

¹⁷ C. LIPP, "Verwandtschaft – ein negiertes Element in der politischen Kultur des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Historische Zeitschrift* 283 (2006), pp. 31-77; D.W. SABEAN and S. TEUSCHER, "Kinship in Europe: A new approach to a long-term development", in: *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to a Long-Term Development (1300-1900)*, ed. D.W. SABEAN et al. (New York and Oxford, 2007), pp. 1-32.

¹⁸ HAHN and BOHN, "Partizipative Identität", pp. 19-23; F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "From 'im-

that can be linked to the assumptions of roles are a test case for some of Luhmann's claims. Instead of looking for spectacular exceptions to the rule, I will concentrate on the use of names as every-day forms of communication, carefully weighing the evidence there is for playing 'roles' as opposed to the inclusion of the 'whole' persona.

Family Names: A Very Short History

First of all, let us very shortly consider the historical development of the family name as a sign system. The family name is part and parcel of the 'European naming system', as it is commonly referred to, which emerged in the Middle Ages.¹⁹ However, it should not be forgotten that in Latin Europe there were several distinct naming systems, and that the family name as a surname transmitted in the male line from one generation to the next is tied only to one of these systems. Although various forms of binominality emerged in most European societies, the family name established itself mainly in north-western continental Europe (including post-conquest England). Here, the family name emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and became almost universal in the later Middle Ages, largely replacing other forms of designation in many contexts. In many medieval societies, however, other practices persisted well into the nineteenth century. Various forms of patronymic designation are found in the Mediterranean world, in the Scandinavian and Gaelic societies and among the Jews, to name only the most important 'exceptions'. In all these societies 'family names' were less common than in the Christian societies of continental Europe north of the Alps. A second indicator that the naming system of north-western Europe should be seen as distinct from – though certainly not independent of – that of other European naming systems is the practice of the so-called married name. While the married name – the assumption of the

provised theatre' to scripted roles: Literacy and changes in communication in North Italian law courts (12th-13th centuries)", in: *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. K. HEIDECKER (Turnhout, 2000: *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 5), pp. 215-237, and ID., "Mittelalterliche Rituale in systemtheoretischer Perspektive: Übergangsriten als basale Kommunikationsform in einer stratifikatorisch-segmentären Gesellschaft", in: *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: Exemplarische Fallstudien*, ed. F. BECKER (Frankfurt am Main, 2004: *Campus Historische Studien* 37), pp. 108-156, esp. p. 148.

¹⁹ M. MITTERAUER, *Ahnen und Heilige: Namengebung in der europäischen Geschichte* (Munich, 1993); cf. also *infra*, n. 21.

groom's family name by the wife at marriage – was an integral part of the north-western European naming system from its beginnings, it remained unknown or at least unimportant outside the German-speaking countries, northern France and the Anglo-Norman realm. This divide is visible even in the modern legal history of the married name, which in England and Germany was legally enforced.²⁰ In France, the married name was never recognised legally, but social custom was so predominant that even today it is a common belief that the name change at marriage was demanded by law.²¹ In countries with a strong patronymic tradition, in contrast, the married name was never recognised legally (Spain and Iceland, for example), or if so, only for a relatively short period (e.g. Finland, Sweden and Scotland). Another feature that seems to be linked to the emergence of the 'European naming system' in north-western Europe is the opposition to double names as (legal) names in these regions.²²

Having established the geographical framework, let us briefly consider the development of this sign system in time and among different social groups. The earliest evidence comes, not surprisingly, from the nobility; given the bias of transmission, one should be very careful with any arguments *e silentio* for other social groups. Yet there are indicators of the development of specifically noble names, as among the landed elites 'family names' were derived first and foremost from toponymics typically referring to estates and, above all, castles. While it is generally agreed that this form of reference established itself in the high Middle Ages – in the eleventh century in modern France,²³ soon after 1066 in England,²⁴ and in the twelfth century in Germany²⁵ – precise dating is

²⁰ G. DREWRY SQUIBB, "The end of the name and arms clause?", *Law Quarterly Review* 69 (1953), pp. 217-225, at p. 220; S.-J. VON SPOLENA-METTERNICH, *Namenserwerb, Namensführung und Namensänderung unter Berücksichtigung von Namensbestandteilen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 79-81; U. SACKSOFSKY, "Eheliches Namenrecht im Zeichen der Gleichberechtigung", *L'Homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 20 (2009), pp. 75-89, at p. 76.

²¹ M.-F. JEAUFFREAU, "Le nom marital dans la société française contemporaine", in: *Le nom dans les sociétés occidentales contemporaines*, ed. A. FINE and F.-R. OUELLETTE (Toulouse, 2005), pp. 213-34, at p. 215, speaking of an "usage perçu comme une obligation légale".

²² V. FESCHET, "The surname in Western Europe: Liberty, equality and paternity in legal systems in the twenty-first century", *L'Homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 20 (2009), pp. 63-73, at p. 64.

²³ For an overview over the recent French research by Monique Bourin and her 'Groupe de recherche d'histoire de l'anthroponymie médiévale' in English, cf. most recently *Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe: Social Identity and Familial Structures*, ed. G. BEECH, M. BOURIN, and P. CHAREILLE (Kalamazoo, MI, 2002).

²⁴ J.C. HOLT, *What's in a Name? Family Nomenclature and the Norman Conquest: The*

seriously hampered by the fact that it is often impossible to distinguish between noble 'names' and 'titles'. However, in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries the nobility can be shown to retain toponymic designations even where the actual possession was lost (or never held) and vice versa to refer always to the same castle (*Stammburg*) even if they possessed several ones.²⁶ The toponymic reference thus had become a name transmitted independently of the possessions and rights it patently referred to.

Compared to the noble surname, family names in other social groups are at first sight different; phenomenologically at least they are much more manifold. In the medieval cities heritable surnames as a rule were derived from individual bynames, most commonly referring to occupation, descendance (patronyms), origin or individual characteristics (sobriquets). At least with occupational names and many sobriquets it is evident that these surnames were derived from social roles in a very similar way as noble names were derived from titles – a feature I will come back to later. Especially in northern Europe these names (occupational names and sobriquets) were the most common types of surnames in the Middle Ages; indeed, they have remained the most common ones until today, with names meaning 'smith' (Smith, Lefevre, Schmid, Kowalski, Kovács, Ferrari) and various names derived from (hair) colours being among the most frequent ones in most European countries.

While in the long run the family name became common in all social groups, the question of the relative chronology remains disputed. It is often held that the spread of the surname was a top-down process driven by the 'imitation' of the elites by those lower down the social hierarchy. As will be discussed below, there are good arguments against this model, but for the moment it is much more important to highlight the long-run success of the family name in all strata of society. At least in the later Middle Ages the surname can positively be shown to spread in all strata of society. Again, there is a marked difference between north-western Europe and the Mediterranean world. By the end of the Middle Ages many sources designated even the poorest inhabitants

Stenton Lecture 1981 (Reading, 1982).

²⁵ MITTERAUER, *Ahnen und Heilige*.

²⁶ G. DUBY, "Lignage, noblesse et chevalerie au XII^e siècle dans la région mâconnaise: Une révision", in: ID., *Hommes et structures du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1973: *Le savoir historique*), pp. 395-422, at pp. 396-399; HOLT, *What's in a Name*, pp. 16-18; K. SCHMID, *Geblüt, Herrschaft, Geschlechterbewusstsein: Grundfragen zum Verständnis des Adels im Mittelalter, aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben*, ed. D. MERTENS and T. ZOTZ (Sigmaringen, 1998: *Vorträge und Forschungen*), pp. 140-142.

of small north-European towns by their surname, while in the Italian cities the family name remained the exception rather than the rule well into modern times. Thus, to quote a random example, the extant tax rolls from fifteenth-century Esslingen contain a considerably higher ratio of entries with surnames than those of seventeenth-century Florence, let alone any earlier Tuscan sources like the famous 1427 *Catasto*.²⁷

Names or Titles? Functional Uses of the Family Name

What, if anything, has all this to do with pre-modern identity? In the following I want to study not the 'naming system' sketched above but rather the use of family names in communication with special regard to the question of the assumption of roles by employing these names. The genesis of the noble family name from titles is, if indirectly, part of my argument which is based on the distinction, or rather the impossibility of a neat distinction, between 'surnames' and 'titles'. This is not to doubt that (noble) surnames were names in any sense of the term; among other things, they became objects of genealogical pride that can only be explained by their quality as names. Quite evidently, they linked the bearer to his ancestors of the same name. In a world that defined 'noble' as 'having a well-known name',²⁸ this aspect of the surname certainly incited nobles to care for their name and to transmit it from one generation to the next. It was also a reason for using an inherited, famous name; every use was potentially a claim to noble descent.

And yet, in certain cases even the bearers of well-established and indeed ancient family names systematically refrained from using their family names. The most evident example are bishops, almost invariably drawn from the nobility, who in their charters hardly ever used their secular titles but rather their ecclesiastical ones, and likewise replaced their family's coats of arms and their personal seal with the diocesan coat of arms and an episcopal seal. This prac-

²⁷ F. BERGER and O.R. ETTER, *Die Familiennamen der Reichsstadt Eßlingen im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1961: *Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg, Reihe B: Forschungen* 15); A. MOLHO, "Noms, mémoire, identité publique à Florence à la fin du moyen âge", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 110 (1998), pp. 137-157; D. HERLIHY and C. KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: Une étude du catasto florentin de 1427* (Paris, 1978).

²⁸ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, x, 184, ed. W.M. LINDSAY, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), 1 [without pagination].

tice is strikingly consistent in all of Europe and throughout the Middle Ages, but of course most interesting in those societies where this practice in effect meant the dropping of an inherited surname.

At first sight, the peculiar way of episcopal self-reference may be interpreted as a 'name change' similar to the practice of the 'religious name', that is, as an outward sign of the change of status. If this were the case, it would concern (in Luhmann's terms) the 'whole' persona and thus be a good example of the definition of individuality by one's status, in this case clerical status. Tempting as this interpretation may be, it cannot be accepted. First of all, one should remember that the religious name itself is a modern institution. In the Middle Ages only the popes (from the eleventh century onwards) systematically changed their names at the assumption of office. Otherwise, the secular and cloistered clergy retained their names, including their family names. The change of name in the context of entering religious life or receiving ordinations remained exceptional well into the fifteenth century and did not become common practice before the seventeenth century.²⁹ Monks and nuns, priests and bishops changed garment but not names when entering religious life and receiving consecrations. To understand the non-use of the family name by (noble) bishops, one has to take into account other explanations. In this context it is of crucial importance that the 'change' of surname, or rather its replacement by ecclesiastical titles, was not a permanent change. A bishop did not 'lose' his family name, he only ceased to use it in certain contexts – namely when acting as a bishop. This is an important difference. The non-use of the family name in the case of bishops is not caused by their 'status' as bishops but rather by their office. This also explains why the 'change' is not linked to the consecration but to the exercise of the episcopal duties; one may also quote the papal name in this context, which is not linked to the consecration either but rather to the election to office. Socially, the bishop was still known by his old surname. If proof were needed, contemporary chronicles provide abundant examples. Taking the bishops of fifteenth-century Constance as an example, one may quote the Klingenberg chronicle, where both the secular and the ecclesiastical names and titles are used indiscriminately to designate bishops, bishop elects and deposed bishops:³⁰

²⁹ Ch. ROLKER, "‘Man ruft dich mit einem neuen Namen ...’: Monastische Namenspraktiken im Mittelalter", in: *Zugehörigkeit(en): Spätmittelalterliche Praktiken der Namengebung im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. G. SIGNORI and Ch. ROLKER (Konstanz, 2011: *Spätmittelalterstudien* 2), pp. 195–214.

³⁰ *Die sog. Klingenberger Chronik des Eberhard Wüst, Stadtschreiber von Rapperswil*, ed.

Also lepton ainsmals iij bischoff, die all bischoffze Costentz gesin warend, bischoff Albrecht Blarer, bischoff Ott, ain margraff von Hochberg, vnd bischoff Fridrich, ain graff von Zolrn. Bischoff Hainrich von Hewen, was vor tumherr vnd techen zu Straßburg, er was och tumpropst zu Costentz vnd ward erwelt anno Domini 1436. Also lebent aber dry, die bischöff waren gesin,: bischoff Albrecht Blarer, bischoff Ott von Hochberg vnd bischoff Hainrich von Hewen.

Once there lived three bishops, all of whom having been Bishops of Constance: Bishop Albrecht Blarer, Bishop Ott, the Margrave of Hochberg, and Bishop Fridrich, the Count of Zolrn. Bishop Heinrich of Hewen, previously canon and dean in Strasbourg, also Provost of Constance, and was elected [Bishop] in the year 1436. Thus there were three bishops: Bishop Albrecht Blarer, Bishop Otto of Hochberg and Bishop Heinrich of Hewen.

Having in this sense two names (or titles), the bishops can be said to consistently have chosen to use the ecclesiastical title instead of their secular names in their charters and in all ‘official’ contexts. This does, of course, not mean that they ceased to be members of their families, in the interest of which they often acted; however, in my opinion the change of title is clear evidence for the perception of the episcopal office as a role clearly distinct from other roles. This argument is strengthened by the fact that the same person was still known by his secular name. A rather curious but telling example of the continued ‘use’ of the secular name outside the performance of episcopal duties, and indeed in manifest violation thereof, are the names of illegitimate offspring of bishops. These children (like many other illegitimate children) received the family names of their fathers. Indeed, again not unlike other fathers of illegitimate children, some bishops also bestowed their given names to illegitimate sons; Heinrich of Hewen, for example, had a son of the same name.³¹ Partly because of the heuristic value of the shared family name it is difficult to establish how common it was for the illegitimate children of a bishop to receive the (secular) surname of the father, as the descendants may simply be overlooked in the case of different surnames. Indeed, there are good reasons to believe that the transmission of the surname has to do with the acceptance of social fatherhood. In the context of the present article, however, these questions need not

B. STETTLER (St. Gall, *Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte* 53), p. 98.

³¹ Ch. HESSE, *St. Mauritius in Zofingen: Verfassungs- und sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte eines mittelalterlichen Chorherrenstiftes* (Aarau, 1992: *Veröffentlichungen zur Zofinger Geschichte* 2), p. 356.

bother us. The point is, rather, that bishops as fathers can be seen to use their secular names, not their ecclesiastical ones.

The argument can be supported by an analysis of the charters issued by those members of the episcopal curia who acted on behalf of the bishop, in particular the vicar general (*vicarius generalis*) and the official (*officialis*). Both had the power to exercise specific episcopal functions on behalf of the bishop; the validity of these acts did not depend on later confirmation, and indeed the bishop could not normally revoke them. Most notably, the judgments of the official could only be appealed against at the archepiscopal court or, more commonly, the papal curia. So the vicar general and the official, while clearly not bishops, nonetheless were performing episcopal functions; their charters had the same legal quality as if they had been issued by the bishop himself. This makes the charters, which have survived in large numbers at least for officials, a good example of acting in well-defined roles. This is also evident from the self-designation of the office-holder; in the charters the office replaced the personal name completely. Without using given name or surname, they issued charters as *vicarius generalis* or *officialis curie Constantiensis* only.

The use and non-use of the surname in different situations may plausibly be taken as evidence of how names were used to shape communication and, in the case of bishops and their representatives, to differentiate between ‘acting as a bishop’ and ‘performing other roles’. One could argue that bishops in many respects are a special case. Indeed there is hardly any office in medieval Europe that was as clearly defined. However, while bishops in this respect may have been exceptional, there is evidence that the family name served to distinguish between different roles in other social groups, too. Instead of adding further examples from the ecclesiastical sphere (popes, abbots, etc.), I will therefore turn to lay naming practices. My examples, again taken from late medieval Constance and its environment, are drawn from the landed nobility as well as the urban milieu.

First of all, a rather general argument can be made for the instability of the noble name. Scholars have often stressed how ‘titles’ became ‘names’ as early as the eleventh century, but it is also true that even centuries after the emergence of the family name it still functioned as a ‘title’. Whereas the nobility may have been the first social group to regularly use family names (a claim that rests, at least partly, on our ignorance concerning other social groups), it was also a group that always remained prone to certain ‘name changes’ with the

acquisition of new fiefdoms or castles. It is also noteworthy that royalty in particular refrained from using 'family names' well into modern times and, insofar they came to use such names, did not assign such names a special role in their dynastic representation. In medieval and early modern Europe, the 'family names' of kings and queens had no special importance. Only during the French Revolution, for example, did the name Capet play an important role (in renaming the former king of France), and it was a bourgeois audience that expected the house of Windsor to change their 'family name' in the twentieth century. This is not only an argument against the top-down model for the spread of the family name, it also suggests that the noble name was less a 'dynastic name' and more a title than it is often thought.

A similar argument holds for the Middle Ages. In the late Middle Ages noble family names may have been subject to some dynastic pride, but still they were 'titles' in the sense that the accumulation (or loss) of fiefdoms might lead to an accumulation (or dropping) of single 'names'. Changing family names did not question dynastic identity. Triple names like Graf Friedrich von Zolr von Schaltzburg genannt von Eselberg, combining several toponymics, were not rare. Not unlike bishops, 'polynymous' noblemen were in the position to choose between different titles / names and did so according to the respective situation. To give only one example, the knight Bilgeri von Heudorf († 1476) issued charters under various names, depending on which rights he was exercising. With the help (and the money) of his two successive wives, Bilgeri bought land and titles (mainly in the Hegau region), most notably two castles, called Langenstein and Gaienhofen. He lived partly on these castles, partly in Constance, where he was citizen for some years. In his charters he would call himself Bilgeri von Heudorf zu Langenstein or Bilgeri von Heudorf zu Gaienhofen, depending on the function in which he was acting. He also used names like Bilgeri von Langenstein zu Gaienhofen, indicating that there was no fundamental difference between the inherited name Von Heudorf and the names referring to fiefdoms acquired in his lifetime.³² This suggests that the noble 'family name' still functioned as a title, and that the use of different names at least sometimes has to do with the playing of distinct roles like the administration of certain goods on account of specific legal claims.

³² H.-J. ERWERTH, *Ritter Bilgeri von Heudorf (gest. 1476). Ein Beitrag zur wirtschaftlichen Lage und sozialen Stellung des Adels im westlichen Bodenseeraum* (Singen, 1992: *Hegau-Bibliothek* 77), with an edition of some charters.

Among the nobility, then, the use of surnames was functional in the sense that the use of particular names was tied to certain rights or offices. Yet how did the naming system outside the nobility operate? Compared to the high clergy and the landed nobility, evidence of the naming practices of the lay elites and artisans of the city of Constance is scarce. However, the earliest extant charters (dating from the second half of the twelfth century) already suggest that the family name was not restricted to the nobility.³³ In the course of the thirteenth century the family name became ever more common in charters, and one may reasonably suspect them to lag behind the development of everyday communication. As is so often the case, the over-representation of the elites conveys the impression that the family name was established first among the most powerful families. However, apart from the general problems of arguments based on negative evidence, there is also an important exception to the supposed rule of the top-down spread of the family name. Namely, the thirteenth-century charters regularly suppress the family names of the holders of the highest offices of the city. While aldermen and many citizens (including ever more artisans) were designated by given name and family name, the mayor (*burgermaister*, *scultetus*), the *ammann* (in Latin called *minister civitatis* or, confusingly, also *scultetus*) and the master of the mint (*monetarius*) were frequently referred to by given name and office only. In an episcopal charter from 1222, for example, fifteen aldermen appear as witnesses. With one exception, they all sign with given name and surname, as was common at the time; the mayor and the master of the mint, however, sign as “*Henricus scultetus*” and “*Azzo monetarius*”, respectively.³⁴ A similar observation can be made for the *ammann*, a very high-ranking lay city officer appointed by the Bishop of Constance. In the thirteenth century the *ammann* rarely appears with his family name. Rudolf Jocheler, for example, whose family name is among the oldest in Constance, issued his charters as “*Rudolfus minister civitatis*” and never used his surname when acting as *ammann*.

According to the theory of the top-down spread of the family name, the mayor and other city officers should have been among the first to have family names, not the last. Indeed there can be little doubt that the mayor, the *ammann*, and other office holders ‘had’ family names, but only in the fourteenth

³³ Cf. the 1176 charter, ed. in: K. BEYERLE, *Grundeigentumsverhältnisse und Bürgerrecht im mittelalterlichen Konstanz. Eine rechts- und verfassungsgeschichtliche Studie mit einem Urkundenbuche und einer topographischen Karte*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg, 1900-1902), 2, pp. 4-7.

³⁴ For edited charters, cf. the index in BEYERLE, *Grundeigentumsverhältnisse* s.v.

and fifteenth centuries did they come to use them in their charters. By this time the family name had spread among all classes of society, including the very poor.³⁵ The absence of the surname in the above-mentioned charters can therefore be described as a suppression of the family name by the designation to office. When acting *ex officio*, high-ranking city officers were less likely to use their family names than in other situations. As in the case of the bishop, this can be taken as evidence of the office demanding the assumption of specific roles, which in communication were signalled *inter alia* by the suppression of the family name.

However, unlike the case of the bishop, these non-uses of the family name are not as closely tied to the exercise of the respective office. The *ammann*, for example, is sometimes designated in tax lists by his office rather than by his family name;³⁶ as his 'role' as mayor does not affect his obligations as tax payer, such examples are evidence *against* a clear-cut concept of the 'role' of the city officers. He was simply known as the *ammann*, independent from whether he acted in this function or not. Further evidence comes from family names themselves. In Constance, as elsewhere in northern Europe, a relatively large number of surnames are derived from (non-hereditary) city offices; in other words, although the 'role' was not inherited by the next generation, the 'title' was. The frequency of German family names like Schulte or Ammann (the very common Meier may also be a case in point) suggests that this happened fairly often. To judge from the frequency of these names as compared to other occupational names, the former became inheritable surnames much more often than the latter. While common occupational names (Schmid, Fischer, Weber) may well be explained by the frequency of the respective occupation, in the case of names derived from offices such an explanation fails completely. It seems therefore legitimate to take the occurrence of 'office surnames' as indicative of the identification of the 'whole persona' with an office, and hence against the distinction between separate roles.

To sum up, in certain cases the office was clearly defined and determined designation fairly strictly in the sense that the use and the non-use of the family name was clearly linked to acting in roles. For the bishop in particular, the distinction of family name versus title was a very neat one; for him the 'title'

³⁵ Even the poorest tax payers, too poor to pay property tax (*habnitse* in contemporary terminology) are listed with their surnames in the Constance tax register; see, e.g., *Die Steuerbücher der Stadt Konstanz*, ed. P. RÜSTER, 3 vols. (Konstanz, 1958-1966: *Konstanzer Geschichts- und Rechtsquellen*, 9, 13, 16), 1, p. 20 and *passim*.

³⁶ For example, *Steuerbücher*, ed. RÜSTER, 1, p. 17.

replaced the family name if and only if the office holder was acting *ex officio*. In other cases there was also the distinction between the office and the holder, but less distinctly so. A mayor was less likely to use his family name than an alderman, and particularly so when acting as mayor. However, unlike the bishop, he later came to use his family name when acting as mayor, while his office sometimes replaced his family name quite independently of his acting as mayor.

The 'Married Name': Multiple Female Naming Practices

As scholarship has traditionally been focussed on male naming practices, my second case study on multiple female naming practices needs a little more background. Relatively little is known about female naming practices in the Middle Ages, and most research has been carried out on the assumption that female naming practices can be conceived in the same way as male practices. All in all, studies in this field tend to assert that female naming practices were a delayed and deficient variant of male practices; according to this model the one-name system persisted longer among women than men but ultimately was replaced by the same naming system.³⁷ There exist other studies more sensitive to gender-specific uses and non-uses of the name, but mainly for Mediterranean Europe.³⁸

Nonetheless, for anyone interested in multiple names, female naming practices in medieval northern Europe are more, not less interesting than male practices. As outlined above, from its beginnings the north-western European naming system knew the so-called 'married name' and hence a specifically female naming practice. Given the state of research, the danger of anachronistic interpretation is even more acute than elsewhere. One should not imagine the medieval practice of the married name to have worked in the same way it did in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe, when in some countries the married name was interpreted as a mandatory and permanent name change upon marriage.³⁹ This position today is mainly known as a dated legal relict

³⁷ In particular, *Persistances du nom unique, 2: Désignation et anthroponymie des femmes: Méthodes statistiques pour l'anthroponymie*, ed. M. BOURIN and P. CHAREILLE (Tours, 1992).

³⁸ See the excellent analyses by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, dealing with fourteenth and fifteenth century Florence, especially the translated essays in: Ch. KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985).

³⁹ For the modern discourse, cf. FESCHET, "Surname", and SACKSOFSKY, "Eheliches Na-

that in the second half of the twentieth century has been widely criticised and sometimes decried as ‘medieval’. Yet far from being medieval and (all-) European, this position in its strict form was specifically modern and, again, restricted to north-western Europe. More precisely, only between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century and mainly in England and the German-speaking countries the ‘married name’ was both legally and socially recognised in such a strict form that it demanded the maiden name to be completely replaced by the married name. As will be shown in detail below, the medieval practice was rather different. In pre-modern Europe the legal name was unknown, and the multiplicity of social names – deemed as ‘contrary to public policy’ by English and German courts in mid-twentieth century⁴⁰ – was a common practice in many towns and cities.

My source materials here are administrative sources and acts of last will from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Constance. Testaments served as a convenient starting point, being preserved in relatively large numbers and allowing for a comparison between the way in which women (as *testatrices*) referred to themselves and the way in which third parties (city scribes, other men and women) referred to them. To broaden my sample, I have collected evidence from late-medieval testaments of ten northern European cities, ranging from mid-sized towns like Zurich to relatively large urban centres like Cologne.⁴¹ We are mainly dealing with urban, economically powerful milieus. All evidence available, however, suggests that as far as names were concerned there were no major differences according to social status. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries only royal families and the very poor show clearly distinct naming practices, while the naming forms found in artisan milieus, rich and poor, did not significantly alter from those of the richest burghers or, for that matter, the landed nobility. More specifically, the family name was well established in all social milieus that at least occasionally appear in the testaments – and this is a relatively wide range of social groups.⁴² Men were referred to in

mensrecht’.

⁴⁰ SQUIBB, “Name and arms”, p. 220; VON SPOLENA-METTERNICH, *Namenserwerb*, pp. 79–81.

⁴¹ The following is partly adopted from Ch. ROLKER, “Marital economy and female naming practices in late-medieval Germany”, in: *Law and Private Life in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Sixth Carlsberg Academy Conference on Medieval Legal History*, ed. P. ANDERSEN *et al.* (Copenhagen, 2011), pp. 49–60. The cities are Basle, Bern, Brunswick, Cologne, Constance, Hamburg, Lübeck, Lüneburg, Regensburg and Zurich.

⁴² In Zurich in particular we find a relatively high number of testators (and testatrices) bequeathing small sums of no more than a few shillings, indicating below-average income.

fairly similar ways in all cities under analysis (i.e. by given name and surname), but for married and widowed women a wider variety of naming forms can be observed. The most common forms to refer to wives and widows were the following: by first name only; by first name and married name; or by first name and a family name different from that of the husband (commonly, but not always, the ‘maiden name’). In all three cases, references to a husband or relatives (most commonly fathers) may be added. Thus, if a Grethe Müllerin married a Hans Schmid, the sources may call her “Grethe”, “Grethe Müllerin” or “Grethe Schmidin”. Especially where the family name is not used one may find additional phrases like “daughter of Heinrich Müller” and / or “wife of Hans Schmid”; indeed, references may completely do without her name, instead referring to male family members only (e.g. “Hans Schmid and his wife, the daughter of Heinrich Müller”). In the testaments the latter form is rare and found only if third parties (men or women) refer to women, never as a way women refer to themselves; otherwise all three forms are found.

Interestingly, there is no marked difference between the way women refer to themselves, how men refer to women, or how women refer to other women. Married women and widows are also referred to roughly in the same way in any given town. However, as already indicated, there were marked differences between the naming forms for men and women and between the ways scribes at different places referred to women. Indeed, the use of family names different from that of the husband was exceptionally rare in some places and almost universal in others. The frequency of the continued use of the ‘maiden name’ in marriage seems to be linked to the economic and legal position of women. For the German-speaking cities of the fourteenth and fifteenth century the correlation seems to be pretty neat. A comparative study of the late medieval testaments of ten cities shows that the ratio of female testators and the frequency of the use of the maiden name are strongly correlated.⁴³ In places like Constance and Cologne, where a considerable part (at times, the majority) of testaments was set up by women or married couples, the use of separate names by both spouses was normal; in Braunschweig, in contrast, we find exceedingly few testaments by women and no evidence for the continued use of the maiden name. Detailed studies for other parts of Europe are lacking, but the available evidence points in a similar direction. In medieval England, for example, the continued use of the ‘maiden name’ in marriage seems to have been excep-

⁴³ ROLKER, “Marital economy”.

tional, while in Flanders it was common.⁴⁴ It seems plausible to link this to the marked contrast between the position of the *femme couverte* in common law and the rather strong economic and legal position of women in Flanders.⁴⁵ A comparison between Scandinavia and Scotland on the one hand and England on the other points in a similar direction too.⁴⁶

Interesting as the practice of the married name as an indicator for the economic position of women in pre-modern Europe may be, for our present purpose a different aspect is more important. I have described, in a rather summary fashion, how the 'economic position' of married woman is inseparably connected to the administration of property coming ultimately from, and potentially going back to, the respective family of origin. Therefore both, the property and the 'maiden' name, linked married women to their families of origin, very much like the 'married name' and the shared marital property constituted important links to the family of the husband. Again, this is an important difference to the modern practice of the 'married name'. Discourse on the continued use of the 'maiden name' has always focussed on biographical continuity of women before and after marriage; the debates on the married name were linked to discussions about gender equality and the relation between two persons, i.e. husband and wife. In contrast, in medieval society the question of 'married' vs. 'maiden' name concerned two families, and specifically the bond between a married woman and her family of origin and not primarily, as in modern times, her life before marriage. This is an important difference in concepts of individuality, but not in order to deny the 'individuality' of medieval women. Rather, it supports the idea that medieval individuality was determined by 'inclusion' into family groups.

However, this is not the whole story; as I want to argue, female naming practices also show elements of 'functional' use and non-use of surnames in the sense of being correlated to the assumption of specific roles. The argument runs as follows. Women administering substantial property that, under certain

⁴⁴ D. POSTLES, *Naming the People of England, c. 1100-1350* (Newcastle, 2006), pp. 125-140; A.L. ERICKSON, "The marital economy in comparative perspective", in: *The Marital Economy in Scandinavia and Britain, 1400-1900*, ed. M. ÅGREN and A.L. ERICKSON (Aldershot, 2005: *Women and Gender in the Early Modern World*), pp. 3-20, at pp. 10-11; D. NICHOLAS, *The Domestic Life of a Medieval City: Women, Children and the Family in Fourteenth-Century Ghent* (Lincoln, 1986), pp. 17-18.

⁴⁵ M.C. HOWELL, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300-1500* (Chicago, 1998: *Women in Culture and Society*).

⁴⁶ ERICKSON, "Marital Economy", p. 11.

circumstances, fell back to their families of origin acted in different roles, depending on which property was mainly affected by their actions. Secondly, wives and widows in the towns and cities under discussion here did not so much change their names as they acquired multiple names. My claim is that both aspects are related: the use of the ‘maiden name’ is linked to the administration of property coming from the family of origin, and thus to a distinct role a wife assumes vis-à-vis her husband and his family. As in the case of office names and noble titles, this claim is much more important than the observation of name changes; the latter may indicate a change of status, but multiple names may be linked to functional uses of alternative names. The question is therefore: did women have several names at the same time, and if so, did they use them in a ‘functional’ way? In other words, did the designation and self-designation of women structure communication in a way similar to the male naming practices discussed so far?

As with all multiple names, interpreting the evidence can be tricky. Usually we assume that the same person is referred to by the same name in different sources, and especially where evidence is scarce, prosopographical studies doing without this assumption or indeed questioning it can be a daring task. An evident danger is falling into an over-sceptic position – if names deceive us, how can we possibly use sources like tax rolls for prosopographical studies? This danger can at least partly be countered by sources referring to the same person by several names at the same time. In serial sources, more than one surname may be listed (e.g. “*Müllerin vel Schmidin*”, “*Schmidin genannt Müllerin*” in the example given above). Interestingly, in the rare examples of extant marriage contracts it is very common that women used their multiple names in the same document. In an exceptional case from fifteenth-century Constance, a re-marrying widow referred to herself in three or four different fashions, depending on how one counts ‘double’ names.⁴⁷ In other cases, several contracts and acts of last will issued under different names have survived, containing enough context and cross-references to allow identification despite multiple surnames. Finally, the frequent mentioning of husbands allows us to establish beyond doubt that in late-medieval Constance both were common, the use of the married name and the continued use of the maiden name in marriage.

⁴⁷ The case of Anna Hartzlerin *alias* Maegelsberg *alias* Langenstein, using all three surnames and yet another seal in her 1478 marriage contract, is discussed in detail in Ch. ROLKER, “‘Ich, Anna Hartzlerin, genannt von Maegelsperg ...’: Namensführung und weibliche Identität im späten Mittelalter”, *L’Homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, 20 (2009), pp. 17-34, esp. pp. 22-23.

The use of either name does not, as one may have expected, depend on the duration of marriage; even after decades of marriage women as wives and widows may use their 'maiden name' frequently or even predominantly. A comparison of female self-designation as evident from the testaments and their designation by third parties – both private charters and administrative sources – reveals further that the use of either name does not depend on the type of source, the sex of the author, or a difference between self-designation and designation by third parties. The only exceptions to this rule belong to the sixteenth century, when administrative sources begin to use the married name more frequently, while in their own charters women continue to use both names.⁴⁸ Before *c.* 1500, however, there is no visible distinction between the social name and the naming practices in administrative sources; the latter followed everyday practice in designating wives and widows with both their maiden and their married names.

As far as any distinction between the use of either name can be discovered, it seems to be connected to the different properties concerned and the question of who is controlling them. In tax rolls, unlike other administrative sources, married women are normally not designated by either surname, while the husbands are ('N.N. and his wife'). In contrast, marriage contracts, which unfortunately are only extant in small numbers, seem to be the only type of document in which women regularly use both names at the same time. In their testaments, including 'double testaments' issued by married couples, married women use either name, apparently without following a clear pattern. Sometimes they use the married name, sometimes the maiden name. Yet in documents referring to marital conflicts, namely conflicts over property, the pattern is very neat: wives suing their husbands or otherwise protecting their property against him consistently use their maiden name and not their married name.

The difference between these four kinds of sources with their different forms of naming is not (primarily) the kind of source or the question of who wrote them; tax rolls and protocols on marital conflicts discussed in the city council, for example, were written by the same scribes, yet the names are profoundly different. Rather, the administration of property seems to be the key. The suppression of the female surname in tax rolls does not prove that women did not have a surname, but rather is due to the fact that the husband was typically paid taxes for himself and his wife; for the tax collector, the arrangement of the marital property did not matter as long as the tax was paid. In marriage

⁴⁸ Cf. *Steuerlisten*, ed. RÜSTER, 3, *passim*.

contracts, in contrast, it was highly relevant which property was brought into marriage by whom and under which conditions; here the respective families of origin ear-marked property, and the use of both names can be connected to the different roles the newly-wed bride had in the administration of different parts of her property. The conflicts over property the city council sought to solve through compromise invariably concern the property originally belonging to the wife's family of origin; here the use of the 'maiden name' seems to be an ostentatious act, reminding the husband and the audience of the continued affiliation of the wife to her natal family.

While in the case of bishops, noblemen and the holders of city offices the distinction was always that between an inherited family name and that of a name-like title or office designation, in the case of women the distinction is that between two family names in the proper sense, one acquired by birth, the other by marriage. The use of either name is not strictly determined by certain situations, as the seemingly indistinct use of both names in testaments shows. However, not only the symbolism of the surname but also the actual use support the idea that there was a link between the administration of property, the belonging to two families and female naming practices. Unlike men, women in the cities of northern Europe commonly 'had' two or more family names, in the sense that they could use more than one name alternatively, and at least partly did use one name or the other (or both) according to situation, sometimes highlighting their 'double' affiliation, sometimes only one.

Conclusions

In medieval Europe, the family name was but one sign system by which individual and collective identities were communicated; unlike clothing or heraldic signs, for example, its use was not regulated (indeed there was not even an attempt at regulation), and compared to given names, surnames were more flexible, being adopted, changed and dropped relatively frequently. Nonetheless, in the later Middle Ages the surname had a role to play in the definition of families and in the individual's affiliation to a given family. The use or non-use of surnames can therefore be seen as being relevant for the definition of 'family' and as structuring communication. While at first sight the emergence of the family name seems to provide straightforward evidence for the definition of individuality by belonging to this or that family, a closer look

at the use and non-use of surnames reveals evidence for role-playing normally associated with 'modern' individuality. Certainly with bishops, often with noble names, and partly with the multiple surnames of married women, we can assume that the surname was used 'functionally', in the sense that the use of this or that name indicated the assumption of specific roles. Given the position of married women and widows between two or more families, it is plausible that they employed surnames to position themselves 'between' their families. Uses of multiple surnames by men – less frequent than in the case of contemporary women, but still common compared to modern times – may well have served similar ends, including the 'undoing' of kinship or the creation of sub-groups within the (relatively) extended family.

These practices do not call into question that 'the family' determined individual identity to a large degree, but they may help to reconcile this concept with a more refined model of the medieval family than the one found in Luhmann. Changing and multiple names are indicative of the changing and multiple affiliations which are summarised as 'family'. Part of the reason why 'the family' was so important in medieval society was that in any given situation different kin groups acted as 'the' family.⁴⁹ Kinship was defined very differently by inheritance laws, ecclesiastical marriage legislation and in everyday life. In one sense, kinship was extremely large, effectively linking almost all inhabitants of smaller communities at least by some sort of kinship (descent, affinity, or spiritual relations); at the same time the groups acting as 'one' family were commonly very small. Within the extended kin group, which itself was constantly changing, there were various overlapping sub-groups which equally changed over time, for various reasons.

In this world of seemingly all-important, yet highly unstable families, surnames were only one out of several 'family signs', and perhaps not even the most important one. Not all family members shared one surname, many used other names as well, and not all people sharing a surname were related (at least not to the same degree). Also, the use of different surnames within one family did not directly affect legal or moral obligations. If distant cousins called themselves by different surnames, they still could not legally marry; a wife using her 'maiden name' in marriage was still married; a man passing a newly acquired sobriquet instead of the paternal surname to his wife and children was still next heir to his father; a bishop not using his inherited title while acting as bishop was still part of his family. Nonetheless, surnames were important

⁴⁹ SABEAN and TEUSCHER, "Kinship".

enough to structure communication, to assume roles, to balance between conflicting family solidarities. An essentially fixed surname, as Bentham imagined it as a means of controlling individuals, could not possibly have served the communicative function the pre-modern family name was employed for. The very reason why surnames mattered was their flexibility and, at times, the possibility to adopt, drop, or change them. Unspectacular as every single use or non-use of surnames may have been, they were employed both to shape the affiliations the individual was defined by and, in the long run, to constitute the ever-changing bonds of kinship.

Body and Time: The Representation of the Naked and Clothed Self in Religious, Social, and Cosmological Orders (Matthäus Schwarz, 1497-1574)

HEIKE SCHLIE

Almost no other representative of the patriciate in the sixteenth century had himself portrayed as often as Matthäus Schwarz (1497-1574), who spent his entire professional life as a bookkeeper in the Fugger merchant house in Augsburg. There are portraits of him made in all periods of his life, and they cover the whole range of contemporary media: paintings, medals, book miniatures. In the so-called *Schwarzsches Trachtenbuch* (*Schwarz's Costume Book*) he had himself represented, between 1519 and 1560, as much as 137 times in clothing he wore on public occasions,¹ that is, he put together in one book 137 portraits of himself, depicting numerous occasions and different situations of his life.

¹ Water colour drawings on parchment, 10×15 cm, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig. Most of the images were done by Narziß Renner, followed by several disciples of Christoph Amberger. Cf. also A. FINK, *Die Schwarzschen Trachtenbücher* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 45 ff.

Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 259-301.

Schwarz is considered by historians to be one of the most important examples of the expression of a new individuality and subjectivity in the early modern period.² Hitherto little attention has been paid to the portraits themselves, their contextualisation or their appreciation in terms of art and representativeness in the sixteenth century. A more exact study of the specific representativeness in the *Trachtenbuch*, however, yields new perspectives for the understanding of the self at this period. The literal self-fashioning of Matthäus Schwarz becomes evident principally through the visual strategies he employs to represent himself and what he hopes to achieve.

This study starts out from the premise that one of the prerequisites or roots of modern individuality in the West lies in the special nature of the Christian doctrine of salvation. Individuality is understood here as an idea that does not conceive the person primarily as part of a whole, but as a single, integral, closed totality to be distinguished from all other individuals. And this is due to the need for individual salvation, a concept that stretches from early Christianity to at least the end of the pre-modern period. What changes is the relationship of the individual to the society within which he / she appears as such a totality. In the Middle Ages the individual is the one who is perceived individually from the outside (especially by God); his / her I-consciousness and I-performance refer principally to a consciousness of the individual need for salvation. The latter directs attention to the individual's own body and a self-enquiry of the spirit. In the late Middle Ages the individual's own view of the world and his / her own salvation come more into play, which can be seen, *inter alia*, by individual forms of lay piety: the individual sees and acts from his / her own

² See V. GROEBNER, "Inside out: Clothes, dissimulation, and the arts of accounting in the autobiography of Matthäus Schwarz, 1496-1574", *Representations* 66 (1999), pp.100-121, at p. 102. A selection of further literature on the *Trachtenbuch*: G. MENTGES, "Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man in Germany: The costume book of Matthäus Schwarz of Augsburg, 1496-1564", in: *Material Strategies: Dress and Gender in Historical Perspective*, ed. B. BURMAN et al. (Malden, 2003) pp. 12-32; K. ARNOLD, "Da het ich die gestalt: Bildliche Selbstzeugnisse in Mittelalter und Renaissance", in: *Das dargestellte Ich: Studien zu Selbstzeugnissen des späteren Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. K. ARNOLD et al. (Bochum, 1999), pp. 201-221, on Schwarz pp. 213-218; H. WUNDER, "Wie wird man ein Mann? Befunde am Beginn der Neuzeit, 15.-17. Jahrhundert", in: *Was sind Frauen? Was sind Männer?*, ed. Ch. EIFERT et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), pp. 130-134; U. PETERS, *Das Ich im Bild: Die Figur des Autors in volkssprachlichen Bilderhandschriften des 13. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 2008), pp. 241-250; Ph. BRAUNSTEIN, "Annäherungen an die Intimität, 14. bis 15. Jahrhundert", in: *Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, 2, ed. Ph. ARIÈS et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), pp. 497-587, at p. 517; U. RUBLACK, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 33-79.

perspective. From this perspective, however, he / she positions himself exclusively in existing systems, even where he / she takes up contrary positions. Moreover, his exteriorisation in the various social areas and his affective interiorisation still do not form the insurmountable contradiction that is constantly emphasised for the modern period – at least this is not displayed by the visible culture.

There is much evidence that self-image in the sixteenth century consists of bearing witness of the *other* from one's own personal perspective. The *Trachtenbuch* of Matthäus Schwarz is one of the so-called self-testimonies or self-narratives (*Selbstzeugnisse*) of the early modern period. The concept suggests that the autobiographer here bears witness to himself, that he self-descriptively positions himself in the focus of the medium. Gabriele Jancke, in her study of patronage relationships, has already indicated that self-narratives of the early modern period refer to other people rather than to the writer of the self-narrative.³ Jancke, who understands the purpose of these writings less as a view at the self than as part of social 'networking', sees autobiographical writing rather as an activity, a *gestus* or social act that can be observed and analysed as such only by historiography.⁴ The external reference of the autobiographer of the early modern period to the surroundings perceived by him / her has already been mentioned by other authors, such as Pierre Monnet in his work on one of the best-known authors of a self-narrative in the sixteenth century, Hermann von Weinsberg of Cologne, who used his person as a vehicle to write, *inter alia*, an apologia of the city of Cologne.⁵ The aporia that presents itself in the general definition of the self-testimonies (the witness cannot be a witness for himself) would thus be solved: the early autobiographer is him / herself a witness for others.

Accordingly, an excessive description of the outside world from the perspective of the individual is typical of individuality in the sixteenth century, and the aim is to show that here the *Trachtenbuch* of Matthäus Schwarz may

³ G. JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis: Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum* (Cologne, 2002); cf. also EAD., "Patronagebeziehungen in autobiographischen Schriften des 16. Jahrhunderts – Individualisierungsweisen?", in: *Selbstzeugnisse in der Frühen Neuzeit: Individualisierungsweisen in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, ed. K. VON GREYERZ (Munich, 2007), pp. 13–32.

⁴ JANCKE, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis*.

⁵ P. MONNET, "Reale und ideale Stadt: Die oberdeutschen Städte im Spiegel autobiographischer Zeugnisse des Spätmittelalters", in: *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich: Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen, 1500–1850*, ed. K. VON GREYERZ et al. (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2001), pp. 395–430.

serve as an example: in this book Schwarz presents a portrait of his own body, clothed and unclothed, a projection and crystallisation figure for the course of history and salvation history. He thus chooses two ways, which at first sight have nothing to do with each other, namely the fashionable appearance of profane clothing and a bodily *christoformitas*. The leading concept of this individuality is his function as a witness: the witness cannot testify for himself in the sense of modern subjectivity but from his own intensely personal perspective can testify for the world, time, and universal salvation. The aim of the description of the self in the world is validation, which refers to both the order described and to one's own positioning within this order. Individuality begins here with an individual perspective or view of the world, and this observer perspective of necessity means a partial detachment from the collective. Schwarz also stages himself not only as an observer, but as an individual mirror of the course of the world and also of salvation history: the passage of time is mirrored in his costumes and the changing fashions of the decades, and salvation history is mirrored in his unclothed and christoform body shown from both sides.

The Individual and the Portrait: Redemption and Singularity

It seems to me at the moment that a much more urgent requirement than an analysis of the differences between concepts of individuality is a study of its continuities. The question would be to what extent the image of man produced by Christian culture in the pre-modern period has also characterised the image of man in the modern period – this is now the subject of a wide-ranging debate in which terms such as ‘religious (re)turn’ (*Rückkehr der Religionen*) are used. The thesis that stands at the beginning of this paper is that of the birth of a special individuality in Christianity through the concept of the salvation of each individual, defining the uniqueness and distinctiveness of that individual. In the divine economy of the Middle Ages and its media this becomes immediately visible. The endowments that guarantee a share in the *thesaurus ecclesiae* for individuals and families record the names of those inscribed as individuals in the divine economy. The images of donors are to be understood in this way. The images associated with donations of, for example, altarpieces and requiem masses also give the names of those people recorded in the documents who are

to be included in the salvific effects of the endowment. In the images it has to be made clear which family member is meant.

The birth of the so-called modern individual in Christianity is also dealt with in systems theory research, for example the work of Cornelia Bohn:

It is quite clearly a matter of a semantic forerunner of modern individuality in the context of religion. Religion thus brings a status-independent form of individualisation on the way.⁶

Semantische Vorbereitung ('semantic forerunner') seems to me, however, to be somewhat misleading: this is not merely a forerunner, it is the thing itself. Nevertheless, it is possible, following up on Bohn's presentation, to formulate a continuity that is suggested by her, because, at least with regard to status-independence, the medieval person is 'individual' only in his / her relationship with God, just as the modern individual can be 'whole' only within a system of his / her own.⁷ The former may be illustrated by another image genre: the images of the dance of death portray representatives of social strata who are indicated and differentiated according to clothing, status attributes and the sequence in which they appear. The problem, however, is that status attributes are accumulated to the point of absurdity, and it is explicitly emphasised that in death all are equal before God in terms of status, exactly like the attribute-less skeleton dancing between them. This means that, at this point, the pre-modern individual is definitely no longer included in the function system of status. With respect to his / her hope for salvation, the person is someone named in the Book of Life, independent of status and social stratum, with quite an individual register of debits and credits: the person stands before God as a completely individual 'I', precisely without any reference to a system functioning according to social status.

In general, however, the prevailing opinion seems to be that as long as the person combines the view of him / herself with hope for salvation and knowledge of God and moves within the straightforward orders of the pre-modern

⁶ C. BOHN, *Inklusion, Exklusion und die Person* (Konstanz, 2006), p. 57: "Es handelt sich ganz offensichtlich um eine semantische Vorbereitung moderner Individualität im Kontext von Religion. Die Religion bringt somit eine statusunabhängige Form der Individuierung auf den Weg" ("Quite obviously, this is a kind of semantically preparing modern individuality within the context of religion. Thus, religion paves the way for a kind of individualisation which is independent of status").

⁷ Cf. C. TAYLOR, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989).

period, there is no room for any kind of individuality which might be compared with those of the modern period. Perhaps it is necessary to see this as if trying to describe the undeniable differences between the ‘concepts of the self’ of pre-modern and modern period. The question, however, is which references are to form the basis of such an analysis of these differences. Everything that we know about an individual’s view of him / herself and his / her history is mediated either by texts or images. For autobiographical texts and portraits, however, it is true that they do not reproduce the way people see themselves but the way they create and stage themselves for a particular context. For sixteenth century portraits, E. Rebel called this ‘modelling the person’.⁸ Thus, to define the differences in the concepts of individuality between the pre-modern and modern periods one has to analyse self-narratives by taking their mediality into account. A self-description or self-representation by way of text or image is always something else than the ‘view of oneself’, it is rather a construction or staging of the self.⁹ And this is a major difference that has to be taken into account. As Andreas Rutz has observed: “Rather, the historical subject in the text constructs itself anew and ultimately meets itself only as an image of itself”,¹⁰ which, in his opinion, nevertheless makes it possible to get “insights into its world of individual thought and emotions”.¹¹ But to guarantee this, competence in literary studies is required for the reading and analysis of self-narratives, such as called for by Andreas Merzhäuser.¹² And I would like to add: in analysing the images for a historiography concerned with evaluating self-narratives, iconographical expertise is indispensable. The images are not

⁸ E. REBEL, *Die Modellierung der Person: Studien zu Dürers Bildnis des Hans Kleberger* (Stuttgart, 1990).

⁹ Essentially this is true also of the modern period, because one has to grasp even the darkest psychologising self-view in the medium as a construct. But there is a difference, at least to the extent that more specific claims of authenticity are made.

¹⁰ A. RUTZ, “Ego-Dokument oder Ich-Konstruktion? Selbstzeugnisse als Quellen zur Erforschung des frühneuzeitlichen Menschen”, *Zeitenblicke* 1 (2002), p. 14, URL: <http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2002/02/rutz/index.html> (consulted 19.07.2010): p. 14. “*Vielmehr konstruiert sich das historische Subjekt im Text jeweils neu und begegnet sich letztlich immer nur als Bild seiner selbst*” (“Rather, by way of text the historical subject is in each case constructed anew, and after all it always encounters his / herself only as an image of him / herself”).

¹¹ RUTZ, “Ego-Dokument oder Ich-Konstruktion?”, p. 18: “*Einblicke in seine individuelle Gedanken- und Gefühlswelt*” (“Insights into his individual world of thought and emotions”).

¹² A. MERZHÄUSER, “Das ‘illiterate’ Ich als Historiograph der Katastrophe: Zur Konstruktion von Geschichte Hans Heberles ‘Zeytregister’, 1618-1672”, *Zeitenblicke* 1 (2002), No. 2, pp. 1-15, at p. 13, URL: <http://www.zeitenblicke.historicum.net/2002/02/merzhaeuser/index.html> (consulted 22.04.15).

the result of self-consideration, but at best models for this self-consideration. They do not copy a factual reality or social structures but have a function within existing social and religious structures. To give one example: when patricians in Burgundy in the fifteenth century have themselves depicted in clothing that is reserved for the nobility and which they do not wear in the real world, the image does not represent any social reality but a claim in the context of image reality. And this claim does not necessarily have to be defined in status terms. The Bruges patrician Pieter Bladelin, for example, who has himself portrayed on the middle section of his altar piece in the town church of Middelburg, painted by Roger van der Weyden, wearing black clothing reserved for the nobility, kneeling in front of Child Jesus, most certainly does encounter Jesus in the form of a pseudo-noble. He chooses for this portrait confrontation with the deity a garment that serves as a reference to the nobility of the Three Kings who visited the Child.

Thus, what do the initially mentioned forms of individuality mean for the genre of the portrait? Or, in other words: what do different forms of portrait culture tell us about the respective concepts of individuality? In art historical research, the genre of the so-called 'autonomous' portrait is seen mostly as the result of a gradual process, in the course of which the person detaches him / herself from his / her religious connections, thus resulting in growing anthropocentrism. It has long been accepted among art historians that the absence of differentiated physiognomy indicates the absence of individuality. The emergence of portraits showing individual, differentiated facial features in the late Middle Ages and their increase in the sixteenth century were regarded as a symptom of a modern individuality that was beginning to emerge in European societies. But now this is not a criterion for the modern period, and the differentiated physiognomies of the early modern period are connected with a general realism of detail in painting, at the same time being influenced by the study of physiognomy which requires differentiability and recognisability with respect to certain character traits, but not similarity to the model. Thus, physiognomical differentiation and similarity in the early modern portrait cannot necessarily be attributed to an increase or greater awareness of 'individuality'. In two different publications on medieval individuality the historian Aaron Gurjewitsch and art historian Bruno Reudenbach – independently of each other – make use of a drawing from the twelfth-century *Hortus Deliciarum* of abbess Herrad von Hohenburg for their diametrically opposed views. In Gurjewitsch's book *The Individual in the European Middle Ages* this drawing, de-

picting the nuns of the convent, serves as an important example of missing individuality: they are depicted without differentiated facial features in a purely numerical way.¹³ The nuns are not individuals, because they have dedicated themselves totally to God, and thus, according to Gurjewitsch, it is not the nuns the image refers to but the convent. Reudenbach, on the other hand, while referring to the same drawing, argues that this is all about individuality because each nun is depicted with her name above her head.¹⁴ Despite the numerical order and non-distinctiveness, he argues, what we have here is a matter of expectation of salvation on the part of each individual and not of the convent collectively. He points out that the absence of differentiation in the mode of representing the heads alone does not prove the absence of a concept of individuality, because there is another mode of representation for this differentiation. In a publication of 2005 on artists' self-portraits it is pointed out, "that medieval studies of today, insisting on an alterity of medieval and modern ways of thinking"¹⁵ should no longer equate an alterity of representation style or signs with the alterity of social concepts. The concern here was to refute Jacob Burckhardt's contention that there was no individual in the Middle Ages: he had not considered the medieval alteritarian method of representation. If the physiognomy of the people represented was not portrayed individually and differentiatedly, this did not indicate alterity in the sense of an absence of individuality in the Middle Ages but alterity in the representation of individuality. And just as the 'only' nominally differentiated nuns in the *Hortus Deliciarum* are hardly a symptom of lacking individuality, the first autonomous portraits of the late Middle Ages and early modern period can hardly be described as a sign of an anthropologically influenced concept of individuality. The appearance of so-called autonomous portraits has been diagnosed, as previously mentioned, as an emancipation from religious ties and evidence of the beginnings of anthropocentrism in the early modern period. However, it is rather that these early portraits function as a *Bußspiegel* ('mirror of penance'), as recent research shows. The written information on the age of those portrayed on six-

¹³ A.J. GURJEWITSCH, *Das Individuum im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1994).

¹⁴ B. REUDENBACH, "Individuum ohne Bildnis? Zum Problem künstlerischer Ausdrucksformen von Individualität im Mittelalter", in: *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. J.A. AERTSEN et al. (Berlin and New York, 1996: *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 24), pp. 807-818.

¹⁵ U. PFISTERER et al., "Introduction", in: *Der Künstler als Kunstwerk: Selbstporträts vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. U. PFISTERER et al. (Stuttgart, 2005), pp. 11-23, at pp. 13-14: "auf Alterität von mittelalterlichen und modernen Denkweisen pochende Mediävistik" ("medieval studies insisting in an alterity of medieval and modern ways of thought").

teenth century portraits have a background in the setting of religiously understood earthly stages of life, as Ruth Slenczka has demonstrated in the case of Hermann Weinsberg and the complex diagram of the life-stages in the Weinsberg book.¹⁶ People were particularly fond of having their portraits painted at the age of 33, the age at which Christ died and rose again from the dead. It was a matter of belief that every person would rise again in the form in which he / she had or would have had when he was 33. The result of this is self-topicalisation, which is motivated with reference to the godly but cannot be abstracted from the earthly. Hetero-reference at these points is always thrown back at self-reference. Dealing with one's own body and its state at the age of 30-33 – by way of comparing it with other bodies – was due to convictions prevailing among the religious collective. However, this had the practical result that one started dealing with the conditions of earthly physicality and particularly with one's own body in a very detailed and general way, a practice which, after all, was to lead towards modernity. So, ultimately it was perhaps precisely the incarnation of the Logos in Christian monotheism that made the paradigm of individuality possible at all in the Western modern period. The introspection of the self is of course concerned with the hope of salvation, but here too it must be emphasised that not only motivation, but the practice of constituting the self is decisive. Independently of the motivation or function, introspection develops into a dynamic of its own forms that – as already suggested – have an after-effect right up to the modern period. It is the attention to the soul and body necessary for salvation that gives rise to an I-consciousness and corresponding introspection in the Christian pre-modern era. In both the pre-Reformation and the Reformation period concepts of subjectivity were developed, even if based on different, sometimes contradictory premises. In the pre-Reformation period it was good works that led to salvation: man took responsibility for his own actions, made decisions and had a free will to do good or evil. In the Reformation, with the Lutheran doctrine of justification, it was no longer following the law that led to salvation, but only belief and God's mercy, but here too man stood before God as a subject-related individual.

In 1486, Pico della Mirandola in his oration *De hominis dignitate* formulated the "self-understanding of man as a free, multiform, self-determining and

¹⁶ R. SLENCZKA, "Die Heilsgeschichte des Lebens: Altersinschriften in der nordalpinen Porträtmalerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 76 (2013), pp. 493-540.

self-producing person”¹⁷ and the conditions that make man a self-responsible creature. He imagined God addressing man as follows:

We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own, in order that whatever, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very centre of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine.¹⁸

Man is a creator of himself (“*quasi arbitriarius honorariusque plastes et fictor*”) and a chameleon that can change his shape at will:

Quis hunc nostrum chamaeleonta non admiretur? ... Sed quorsum haec? ut intellegamus, postquam hac nati sumus conditione, ut id simus, quod esse volumus, curare hoc potissimum debere nos ...

Who then will not look with awe upon this our chameleon? ... But what is the purpose of all this? That we may understand, since we have been born in this condition that we may be what we choose to be, that we must take the greatest care of this.¹⁹

¹⁷ N. RICKEN, *Subjektivität und Kontingenz: Markierungen im pädagogischen Diskurs* (Würzburg, 1999), p. 40: “Selbstverständnis des Menschen als eines freien, vielgestaltigen und sich darin selbst erst bestimmenden und als sich selbst hervorbringenden Menschen” (“Man’s self-understanding as being free, varied, only this way self-determining and self-creating”).

¹⁸ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Rede über die Würde des Menschen – Oratio de hominis dignitate*, ed. and trans. G. VON DER GÖNNA (Stuttgart, 1997), §4,18; English trans. <http://www.cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Mirandola/> (consulted 09.07.10); cf. also http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/pico/, containing the text with annotations and versions in Latin, Italian and English.

¹⁹ See *supra*, n. 18.

As the metaphors formulated here are not unimportant for the portrait culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as Rebel shows,²⁰ a brief explanation may be given here. Pico designs an individual that makes the world his own, shaping himself on the way (hence the metaphor of the creator). The 'world formation' is associated with 'self-transformation' (hence the chameleon), with the help of which man takes his fate into his own hands and determines the form of the conditions of his life. It may be pointed out that this is not a revolutionary new view of humanism, but rather one that is informed by very much older ideas of the high Middle Ages. In particular, one might cite the catalogue of the *artes* found in medieval treatises, including the *artes mechanicae*, which help man to give shape to life on earth, to take the conditions of life into his own hands and improve them in order to win back a part of the state of paradise (Hugo of St. Victor), i.e. the *status incorruptionis* of every individual.²¹ In this context it is of interest with respect to the *Trachtenbuch* that, according to Marsilio Ficino's *De vita libri tres*, every person is responsible for his own body and has to take care of it because it is an everyday tool.²²

If the person portrays him / herself and is able to choose his / her *Sein* ('being'), there are also consequences for his media creation and use. Questions of 'individuality' necessarily arise in art historical research in cases where works of art take on individual forms that are different from all other works. Cornelia Bohn labels this *Individualitätssemantiken* ('individuality semantics'). What these works have in common is that they are always something of an enigma precisely because nothing comparable to them can be found in their period and they cannot be fitted into art historical systems and development concepts. Images of this sort tend to create the impression that their form points to concepts of individuality entertained by the patron or the artist. What view does an artist completely diverging from tradition have of himself? What view does the patron who has himself depicted in a completely new way have of himself? It is precisely in the sixteenth century that singular self-representations, which are

²⁰ REBEL, *Die Modellierung der Person*.

²¹ E. WHITNEY, "Paradise restored: The mechanical arts from Antiquity through the thirteenth century", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 80 (1990), pp. 1-169. In the *Didascalicon* (c. 1127) of Hugo of St. Victor (about 1097-1141), for example, it is known that the *artes mechanicae* are described as part of the *actiones humanae* in their connection with the reconstitution of the *integritas* lost through original sin (Hugo of St. Victor, *Didascalicon – De Studio Legendi* (c. 1127), trans. Th. OFFERGELD (Freiburg etc., 1997: *Fontes Christianae* 27), pp. 7-102).

²² See in detail Ch. LUMME, *Höllenfleisch und Heiligtum: Der menschliche Körper im Spiegel autobiographischer Texte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), p. 77.



Fig. 1 Hans Maler, *Portrait of Matthäus Schwarz* (1521). Paris, Louvre

not easy to explain, become widespread, even though a lot is known about those represented. It is precisely the religious function that is often overlooked here. The *Trachtenbuch* of Matthäus Schwarz is unique in its own way: it re-

mains to be demonstrated that the bookkeeper has created a unique medium, in which the earthly, the cosmic, and salvation history are visible in his person as on a projection screen and – uniquely – can be visible only in this way. Schwarz's individuality, his self-understanding as, in this respect, a self-contained individual with his own perspective, is expressed in his particular testimony.

“Da fieng ich an zu rechordieren” (“Then I started recording”): The Testimony of Matthäus Schwarz

The portrait by Hans Maler from 1526 (Fig. 1) shows Schwarz with a lute, looking rather like a dandy. His predilection for ostentatious, expensive clothing as a means of self-presentation also reinforces the dandy comparison. This portrait of Schwarz with the hour glass and clock, which he wears around his neck and which could be interpreted as a symbol of vanity, reveals for the first time what one might call his obsession with time.

While his autobiographical text *The Course of the World* does not survive, his *Trachtenbuch* portrays him chronologically at different events of his life in ceremonial clothing of various periods of his life. They may even be self-portraits of a sort, since it is probable that he supplied the artists involved with studies he himself drew. The first commission to elaborate his drawings was awarded to Narziß Renner, and later commissions to various artists from the Christoph Amberger circle. The *Trachtenbuch* is unique, but closely resembles the collections of portraits of rulers, such as the parchment-coloured pen and ink drawings in the fictitious travel report of Georg von Ehingen (1470).²³ Fink points out that Fig. 23 in the *Trachtenbuch* is based on a portrait of the *Weiß-*

²³ Georg von Ehingen, *Reise nach der Ritterschaft* (1457), Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Hist. Quart 141 (copy of 1550 with drawings after a manuscript of 1470); see M. KUSCHE, “Der christliche Ritter und seine Dame: Das Repräsentationsbildnis in ganzer Figur”, *Pantheon* 49 (1991), pp. 4-35, at pp. 11-13, Figs. 36-39. Because Kusche also deals with the *Trachtenbuch* (Figs. 59-63), the modes of representation and the connection between script and image can easily be compared. Other collections of images of princes, such as the *Statuts de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or* (Statutes and Armorial of the Order of the Golden Fleece, various copies from 1445-1481) might also be used for comparison if one wants to examine the alignment of Schwarz's images to those of courtly formulae.

kunig of Maximilian I (woodcut by Hans Burgkmair).²⁴ The difference is that the images in the *Trachtenbuch* always show the same person.

In the preface too it becomes clear that the costumes are not so much a means of expressing his social status, his wealth and his good taste²⁵ but a visual mark of or a metaphor for the changes of the world over time:

I can tell you that I was always happy to be with old people and listen to their answers to my questions. Among other things, we used to talk about dress and the style of clothing and how it would change from day to day. For example, they used to show me pictures of the costumes they had worn 30, 40 or 50 years ago, which seemed very strange to me compared with today's costumes. This gave me the idea of copying mine too, to be able to see over 5 or 10 years, or more, what would become of them.²⁶

Matthäus speaks with the old people about many things of the past, but "change" reveals itself only in the cases in which images are able to speak as witnesses of past material culture. Thus, fashion becomes the visual focal point of this temporal change, which he brings about on himself and through his own physical person. The eleventh figure in the *Trachtenbuch* names the beginning of him being a witness of his time at the age of 14: "*Da fieng ich an zů rechordiren, müst all ding beschriben werden*" ("At that time I began to record, all things had to be described"). In 1514 he starts to "*alle klaider aufzözeichnen*" ("depict all garments") (*Trachtenbuch* Fig. 19). In the *Trachtenbuch* it is not the pages that are counted but every single figure representing Schwarz:²⁷ sometimes he is represented three times on a page, and this page has three numbers (*Trachtenbuch* Figs. 68-70, here Fig. 2). Time is counted via his body.

²⁴ Cf. FINK, *Die Schwarzschen Trachtenbücher*, p. 24.

²⁵ The *Trachtenbuch* is often reduced to these functions, e.g. by C.M. BELFANTI, "The civilization of fashion: At the origins of a western social institution", *Journal of Social History* 43 (2009), pp. 261-283, at p. 272.

²⁶ "*Da sprich ich, das ich all mein Tag gern was bey den alten, und ire antwort meyner frag was mir ein grose freud zö hern. Und under anderm ward wyr etwa auch zö röd der trachtung und monier der klaydungen, wie sy sich also teglich verkerete. Und etwa zeigten sy mir ir trachtencontrofat, so sy vor 30, 40 in 50 jarn getragen hetten, das mich ser wundert und ein seltzam ding gedaucht gögen der zu dieser zeit. / Das ursacht mich, die meyne auch zu controfaten, zu sehen uber ein zeit als 5, in 10 oder mer jarn, was doch daraus werden wölle*". There is a complete text only in the copies of the *Trachtenbuch* of the early eighteenth century, which can be found in Hanover and Paris; cf. FINK, *Die Schwarzschen Trachtenbücher*, p. 99.

²⁷ This contradicts Gabriele Mentges (see MENTGES, "Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man", p. 27).

Not only is the exact date on which he wore a certain costume recorded, but also his age to the exact month and day. The writing is on a cartolino rolled at the sides that is painted as if it was firmly attached to the image. It even casts a shadow on the page of the book and the illustrated parchment to emphasise the image's material and medial qualities.

Schwarz started the book when he was twenty-three and reconstructed the clothing for the first ten figures. He placed great value on authenticity: he questioned his father as a witness, thus clinging to the memory of his family history.²⁸ From the pregnancy of his mother in 1496 to the death of Anton Fugger, events in the life of Matthäus Schwarz are depicted in the *Trachtenbuch*, completely with appropriate clothing. The entire layout makes it clear that it is much less a fashion book per se than a representation of the Matthäus's journey through the world and through time, a journey whose stations become manifest in the change of clothing. On the page showing Fig. 72 the text reads:

30 July 1525 Innsbruck, at Laux Schaller's wedding in Schwaz in August. The beret was embroidered with satin. At that time I was beginning to get corpulent and fat. 28 years, 5 months 8 days.

The clothing does not refer merely to Matthäus's status, though it is important to note that man in the pre-modern period was always the same integral person, having always the same role and status in a society differentiated not functionally but by strata.²⁹ However, the visual signs of costume are not only used to indicate his rank or role, not in the images and not in the reality of the social contexts. For certain events (weddings, military gatherings), Schwarz's *Trachtenbuch* shows unified clothing for everybody involved; on the other hand, Schwarz tends to cultivate 'fashion', which can be seen in the strongly varied costumes. He procures expensive garments, above all on his birthdays, and recognises in fashion a time-dependent phenomenon: in 1560 the fashion of

²⁸ Cf. J.-Cl. SCHMITT, "Die Lebensrythmen in den bildlichen Darstellungen spätmittelalterlicher Autobiographien", in: *Alterskulturen und Potentiale des Alter(n)s*, ed. H. FANGERAU et al. (Berlin, 2007), pp. 109-123, at pp. 119-120.

²⁹ See the system theoretical approach in F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, "Mittelalterliche Rituale in systemtheoretischer Perspektive: Übergangsriten als basale Kommunikationsform in einer stratifikatorisch-segmentären Gesellschaft", in: *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: Exemplarische Fallstudien*, ed. F. BECKER (Frankfurt am Main, 2004: *Campus Historische Studien* 37), pp. 108-156, at p. 147: "Anders als heute, kam es nicht zu differenzierten Rollenübernahmen für die verschiedenen Bereiche des sozialen Lebens" ("Unlike today it was not a matter of differentiated role playing for the various areas of social life").

160 161 170
 Im Juny 1574: drey xclay prellt in edd
 zu hosen sampt vberzug alles wie die
 on wams. aber dreyerley gernerde
 mit dem vram stinck von 8 miniat



271ax 22000

← **Fig. 2** Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (1519-1560), Figs. 68-70. Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Inv H. 27: 67a

1520 seems absurd to him. Belfanti points out that in the sixteenth century there is an awareness that one is in fact not able to choose clothing freely. However, he does not mean the social restrictions of dress codes, but rather, as it were, the constraint of fashion and the power of time: time creates fashion and destroys it again.³⁰

Valentin Groebner has rightly observed that the luxury of the depicted and described garments does not correspond to the rank of a merchant; the main signs “embroidered sleeves and silver applications, multi-coloured striped garments, silver buttons in places where buttons are unnecessary, slit trousers and doublets that show the lining” – all these belong to the things that, for example, Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg declares as being unsuitable for the clothing of a merchant.³¹ Zitzlsperger points out that Schwarz’s use of marten fur as inner lining in September 1530 constituted an actual infringement of the dress code.³² This particular item was for use by the nobility only, and Schwarz had not been ennobled by this time. But it is precisely all these luxury details that Schwarz needs, at least for the context of the *Trachtenbuch*, because they show most clearly the differences in fashion and thus ‘the signs of the time’. We should not confuse the function of clothing in the *Trachtenbuch* with the function of clothing as an image or visual sign in life, where Schwarz might have used the regard for and violation of the dress code for self-staging in different contexts, in what Groebner has called the “system of optical assignment and distinction”. With reference to the function of costumes I agree with Groebner here, and with Philipp Zitzlsperger, who sees the *Trachtenbuch* above all as “*Musterbuch der sozialgeschichtlichen Kleiderkunde*” (“sample book of sociohistorical dress”).³³ But in my opinion Groebner as well as Zitzls

³⁰ BELFANTI, “The civilization of fashion”, p. 265.

³¹ Cf. V. GROEBNER, “Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns: Zum ‘*Trachtenbuch*’ eines Augsburger Bürgers im 16. Jahrhundert”, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 25 (1998), pp. 323-358, at p. 347.

³² Ph. ZITZLSPERGER, *Dürers Pelz und das Recht im Bild: Kleiderkunde als Methode der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, 2008), p. 46.

³³ ZITZLSPERGER, *Dürers Pelz und das Recht im Bild*, p. 43. He stresses the “*Dichotomie zwischen Bild- und Alltagsrealität*” (“dichotomy between image and everyday reality”); in the book itself this approach, in my opinion, is not used sufficiently. Similar considerations apply to Ulinka Rublack’s important costume-historical study (RUBLACK, *Dressing Up*, see e.g. p. 53). Quite obviously here we still identify a conflict between cultural-historical and media-theoretical

perger are confusing the image of the costume with the costume itself – which can easily happen, because the costume itself is an artificial optical sign whose aesthetics even have a pictorial effect of their own, as Christopher Breward has pointed out.³⁴ But the costume as image and the costume within the image are different things. The clothing in the *Trachtenbuch* is not the expression of ‘rank’ or political symbols, as Groebner assumes,³⁵ but symbols of ‘time’,³⁶ “*der Welt Lauf*”, the course of the world, and the changes a place undergoes. Time and again Matthäus points to the written autobiography that he destroyed, for example when he points to his first love affair with a Dutch woman, an affair he seems to regret: “20. Febroario 1520. Da stach mich der Narr mit einer niederländischen Jungfrau laut ‘*der Welt lauf*’, 23. cap., 28. blat. *Hernach in diser klaydung*”.³⁷ It becomes clear here what the *Trachtenbuch* is for: it is for the transmission and condensation of a chronicle of one’s own person and outward appearance, which for him is a visual guide through the course of the world. It has often been overlooked that the official dress codes that visualise social order and hierarchy are in conflict with the taste for fashion from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards.³⁸ New dress codes were less concerned with limiting the freedom of representation through clothing for the lower classes than with integrating new fashions into a dress code and codifying the new forms.³⁹ Necessarily the very temporality of fashion meant that this was always bound to fail.

It is striking how many horse-drawn sleighs there are in the *Trachtenbuch*. The equipping and use of sleighs, like clothing, were subject to certain regulations of a city. In 1530 the city of Augsburg prohibited certain forms of transport and, as a sumptuary tax, imposed upper limits on the prices that could be paid for carriages.⁴⁰ Horse-drawn sleighs also reflect changing fashions be-

approaches.

³⁴ Ch. BREWARD, *Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester, 1995), p. 67.

³⁵ GROEBNER, “Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns”, p. 348.

³⁶ The enormously important role of the concept of time is substantially discussed only by MENTGES, “Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man in Germany” and SCHMITT, “Die Lebensrythmen in den bildlichen Darstellungen”, who do not, however, consider the salvation aspect of time, which is constitutive for the whole concept. Mentges associates the idea of administering linear time with Schwarz’s fashioning of his masculine self in society (p. 29).

³⁷ “Here I began a foolish affair with a Dutch woman as I wrote in ‘The way of the World’, chapter 23, page 28. Afterwards in this costume”.

³⁸ BELFANTI, “The civilization of fashion”, p. 262.

³⁹ See *supra*.

⁴⁰ See D. BOECKER, “Artikel ‘Schlitten’”, in: *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen*

cause their form and the type of decoration change with time. These sleighs in the *Trachtenbuch* are, among other things, also image carriers and show figures with costumes (*Trachtenbuch* Fig. 44). That is, they are images within images that were allowed to display a moment of self-reflection. Schwarz moves through Augsburg in a vehicle that, like the *Trachtenbuch* itself, carries images showing fashionable clothes. Like the *Trachtenbuch*, the sleigh is a medium that makes the passage of time visible.

“Controfatten” and Christoformitas

Groeber attributes the entire *Trachtenbuch* to a painstaking self-view and self-scrutiny of Schwarz,⁴¹ which he connects to his work as a bookkeeper and the system of double book-keeping successfully introduced by him. This argument has already been advanced by Fink: Matthäus Schwarz became a “book-keeper on his own account”.⁴² The connection between the concept of the *Trachtenbuch* and the principles of bookkeeping is evident in the images themselves. In what is probably the most famous image in the book, Schwarz has himself represented in the office together with Jakob Fugger. At the same time there seems to be a connection between *controfatten*, which is a technical term from the field of double bookkeeping,⁴³ and the term *controfatten* in portraiture, described by Groeber also as *dissimulazione*, whereby the meaning of *controfatten* as deception or even forgery also comes into play.⁴⁴ If Schwarz sees a connection here, it is in my opinion an awareness formed by comparison: in terms of bookkeeping, the comparison is with books that have double positions; in terms of time, the comparison is between real clothing and that of the image.

Reich: *Bilder und Begriffe*, ed. W. PARAVICINI et al. (Ostfildern, 2005: *Residenzenforschung* 15.11, 1-2), pp. 128-129.

⁴¹ GROEBNER, “Inside out”, pp. 112-115.

⁴² FINK, *Die Schwarzschen Trachtenbücher*, p. 21.

⁴³ Multiple book-keeping, according to the work on the subject written by Schwarz in 1518, is “*ein gegenschreiber oder contralier*” (“a counter-scribe or contralier”); cf. A. WEITNAUER, *Der venezianische Handel der Fugger: Nach der Musterbuchhaltung des Matthäus Schwarz* (Munich and Leipzig, 1931), p. 22. Cf. G. MENTGES, “Die Buchhaltung der biographischen Zeit: Das Kleiderbuch des Augsburger Bürgers Matthäus Schwarz”, in: *Selfactor: Zeitformen des Textilen – Schnittformen der Zeit*, ed. E. HARLIZIUS-KLÜCK et al. (Berlin, 2002), pp. 109-136, at p. 124.

⁴⁴ GROEBNER, “Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns”, p. 338.



Fig. 3 Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (1519-1560), Figs. 79-80. Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Inv H. 27: 67a

Mentges points out that Schwarz uses the Arabic numbers of bookkeeping for counting his *figurae*. “[Clothing] is the level at which book-keeping order can impinge upon on the life of Matthäus ... Clothing helps him to become the administrator of his biographical time”.⁴⁵ Schwarz indeed not only ‘administers’ his time but wants to depict universal time or its course by his own person

⁴⁵ MENTGES, “Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance Man in Germany”, p. 27 (“[Die Bekleidung] ist die Ebene auf der die buchhalterische Ordnung in das Leben des Matthäus greifen kann. ... Mit Hilfe der Kleidung verwaltet er seine biographische Zeit”). GROEBNER, “Inside out”, p. 100, also expresses his opinion: “The clothes he wanted to preserve in memory are biographical; he therefore explicitly excludes his carnival costumes”. But the clothes do not show his individually biographical time but absolute calendar time: clothes are depicted that are worn by young and old alike and, in terms of fashion, show a point of time in the course of the world. Carnival costumes cannot do this, because they are subject to laws other than those of fashion.

and body. The body as a microcosm is directly connected with the universal divine macrocosm in the sense of “analogical thinking, according to which the grammar of the body corresponded with the grammar of the cosmos”.⁴⁶

But universal time in Christianity is time of an order other than that of fashion, namely that of salvation history. The most extraordinary pages are perhaps those which show Schwarz naked, from the back and the front, a self-description that at first does not reveal whether it is intended to express self-satisfaction, self-criticism, or simply neutrality (*Trachtenbuch* Figs. 79 and 80, here Fig. 3). “*Primo Julius 1526 was das meine rechte Gestalt hinderwertlingen, dan ich wart faist und dick worden. 29 1 / 3 jar 8 tag*” (“First of July 1526 this was my shape from behind, when I had become corpulent and fat. 29 and one third years and eight days”) and “*Ad primo Julius was das mein rechte ggestalt vorwärts als entgögen*” (“First of July this was my shape in the front view”). Lorne Campbell comments laconically: “Why, when he was so worried about being overweight, he should have decided to include representations of his naked body, is mysterious”.⁴⁷ Valentin Groebner holds that Schwarz is showing himself here in the above-mentioned sense of “a few months before his thirtieth birthday” in the “paradise or purgatory look”. But even if one acknowledges that the age of Christ at his death was not always estimated at 33, but occasionally also at 30, the man was just 29 when the painting was actually done. Nevertheless, the age between 28 and 33 seems to refer to Christ in particular: the self-portrait of Dürer from 1500 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), in which he uses the Vera Icon, the most famous Christological *acheiropoieton* image-type, in order to represent himself in *christoformitas*, shows Dürer at the age of 28. In the division of the ages by St Augustine *adolescentia* finishes at the age of 28.⁴⁸

Schwarz was very precise in specifying the time and in specifying the details of his physical appearance. In Groebner’s view “it is clearly Schwarz’s view of himself that is meant to be presented here”.⁴⁹ The self-scrutiny mentioned by Groebner, that I would like to describe rather as self-presentation or self-modelling is, however, not a phenomenon limited to bookkeepers or mer-

⁴⁶ LUMME, *Höllenfleisch und Heiligtum*, p. 125: “Analogiedenken, nach dem die Grammatik des Leibes mit der Grammatik des Kosmos korrespondiert”.

⁴⁷ L. CAMPBELL, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven, 1990).

⁴⁸ SCHMITT, “Die Lebensrhythmen in den bildlichen Darstellungen”.

⁴⁹ GROEBNER, “Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns”, p. 338.



Fig. 4 *Holy Shroud (Sacra Sindone)*. Turin, Cathedral

chants. The images are not the result of self-consideration but at best models for self-consideration that can serve quite different purposes. The critical self-scrutiny described in the case of Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg in the sense of a pursuit of one's own purgation, cited by Groebner as a source,⁵⁰ has little to do with the *Trachtenbuch*. Exactly eleven months prior to the two nudes he had declared that he was beginning to become corpulent and fat (Fig. 72, see above). I hardly think that he wanted to say "when I was beginning to become sinful". In Geiler of Kaysersberg it is a matter of reading the signs of the body as the effect of sin that is made clear to the one considering himself. It would be more appropriate to cite Geiler von Kaysersberg in the context of other portraits that really served the purpose of a 'penitential mirror' and purgation, currently being studied by Ruth Slenczka and Johanna Scheel. The primary viewer of these portraits is their subject, who by looking at himself questions the state of his sinfulness.

The question then remains why Schwarz permits himself to be depicted naked from both sides.⁵¹ In my opinion, reference to the aging process here has a different function. Nakedness establishes bodily change as a time phenomenon: not only does the clothing change and is a symbol of time, but this change also applies to the body. But whereas fashion is able to show an 'exact time' in the course of the world, just as certain constellations of planets can, his body cannot do so: at every period of time there are aging bodies that reveal more or less the same characteristics of an aging body. The body of Matthäus Schwarz is subject to a different concept of time, namely his individual time as a person

⁵⁰ GROEBNER, "Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns", p. 339.

⁵¹ There are some fairly wild explanations for the representation of the naked image: according to Kusche, "Der christliche Ritter und seine Dame", p. 12, they have the more production-aesthetic function "*die Proportionen des Körpers genau festzuhalten*" ("of exactly determining the proportions of the body").



Fig. 5 Copy after a drawing of Hans Burgkmair, *Siamesian Twins* (1527). Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie

needing salvation in salvation history. Schwarz has his front and back, the entire naked body in fact, depicted. The frontality is striking and does not apply to the costume images depicted. The image must have reminded all of his contemporaries of the Shroud of Christ (Fig. 4) which shows the naked body of Christ front and back and was not only exhibited at intervals in Turin, but was also widely available in numerous copies. Just as Dürer in his self-portrait of 1500 used the Vera Icon to illustrate his *christoformitas*, Schwarz, using another Christological image produced by contact, recalls his own *christoformitas* by using the representation of his totally naked body. He was probably using one of Dürer's self-portrait nudes as the basis of his own⁵² – an aspect that cannot be examined in more detail here. The widespread nature of self-

⁵² On Dürer's self-portraits see J.L. KOERNER, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London, 1993), pp. 176-239, figs. 9-120.



Fig. 6 Copy of the Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (early eighteenth century), Fig. 1, 'Parents of Matthäus Schwarz'. Hannover, Landesbibliothek, XVH 988



Fig. 7 Jean Fouquet, 'Visitation' (1450-1460). MS Chantilly, Musée Condé, 71, Fragment of the Book of Hours of Etienne Chevalier

fashioning 'in the shape of Christ' in the sixteenth century has been demonstrated by Stephen Greenblatt who refers to numerous English sources.⁵³ In fact, the representations could also be connected with the death of Fugger, even if not in the sense understood by Mentges: "The death of a master is taken by Schwarz as an opportunity to hold on to his resurrection corporeality".⁵⁴

In the sixteenth century this complete view of the human body as a sort of inventory, the view from both sides, the visual completeness as the ideal image of the body, transferred itself to other image types. Thus, the two naked representations in the *Trachtenbuch* resemble the copy of a drawing by Hans Burgkmair, which shows Siamese twins born in 1513 with 6 legs (Fig. 5). So that the entire body can be captured exactly, it is represented front and back. The date and description of the precise circumstances, as in the case of Schwarz, are inscribed under the image. The drawing was accompanied by a pendant with a similar design, bearing the representation of a comet observed in 1527. The miscarriage is seen as a sign of cosmological time as much as a testimony to certain planetary conjunctions, which in turn are responsible for events on earth. For this body, that shows signs of cosmological events, the iconographic model of a body giving perfect testimony is chosen, as here too the Turin Shroud that bears the traces of Christ's dead body.⁵⁵

The first *figura* in the *Trachtenbuch*, in which Schwarz depicts himself and in which he is covered by the pregnant body of his mother Agnes Staudachin ("ich war verborgen in 1496" – "I was concealed in 1496"), is also evidence of *christoformitas* (Fig. 6).⁵⁶ In the Christian tradition the Visitation is considered

⁵³ S. GREENBLATT, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London, 1980), pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ MENTGES, "Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man in Germany", p. 25: "The loss occasioned by Fugger's death may have left Schwarz feeling vulnerable and naked". This view of the symbolic aspect of nakedness is too modern. The same can be said of SCHMITT, "Die Lebensrythmen in den bildlichen Darstellungen", p. 121, who suggests that it was a "period of depression", triggered by Fugger's death, that led to this sort of representation. See also LUMME, *Höllenfleisch und Heiligtum*, p. 65, who maintains that "the uncovered body" is to be compared with a "symbolic reversal with retreat from social exchange" and appears, after Fugger's death, as the "symbol of the life crisis". On the idea of the continuity of the material body after death that is integral to the person see C.W. BYNUM, "Material continuity, personal survival and the resurrection of the body: A scholastic discussion in its medieval and modern contexts", in: *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, ed. C.W. BYNUM (New York, 1991), pp. 239-298.

⁵⁵ This is explained in more detail by this author in a research project on 'Zeugenschaft' ('Witnessing and Testimony') at the Centre for Literary and Cultural Research in Berlin.

⁵⁶ This folio is missing in the Brunswick original and is extant only in the copies in Hanover

to be the first representation of Christ (in the pregnant body of Mary), because John in the body of Elizabeth was the first to recognise Christ as the Messiah (Fig. 7). The images of the Visitation are partly distinctive in that Mary and Elizabeth, like Agnes Staudachin in the *Trachtenbuch*, raise their overgarments or pull them to one side as in a gesture of revelation.⁵⁷ In pre-modern theology, the concealment of Christ in the body of his mother corresponds to the invisibility of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist, its presence beneath the 'veil of the bread', whereas the divine nature of Christ is hidden behind the veil of flesh (*velum carnis*).

If Schwarz follows this tradition, then he chooses as his first *figura* the first (invisible) *figura* of Christ. Moreover, he makes a statement about the body as 'clothing' that conceals (the body of the pregnant mother) and about the clothing as concealment and marking, through which something else becomes visible. The image by which Schwarz tells about his apparent death at the age of two and the interrupted funeral (*Trachtenbuch* Fig. 2, here Fig. 8) is of this type. It shows a church space with a gravedigger and a midwife holding the small child's body in her arm, tightly wrapped in a burial shroud. Here too the cloth completely conceals the body of Matthäus Schwarz, suggesting and recalling images of Lazarus raised from the dead and the representation of Jesus as a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes as depicted by Mantegna (Fig. 9), the swaddling clothes being associated here with the burial shroud. That there is a connection here is shown by his birth image in the *Trachtenbuch*, where he mentions his diapers as his first clothes in the world, "*die erst klaydung in der welt*".

The nudes show the costume of the flesh and reveal the difference between themselves and the colourful costumes made of fabric. The unclothed body also points to the changing power and different nature of clothes. While the costume figures are mostly dark figures against a light background, the light flesh-coloured body is set against the dark monochrome background (Fig. 3). While the costumes are located in a spatially urban or domestic context, which stands for chronological social time, the time of the individual body and the costume of its flesh is aligned with the cyclical time of salvation history. This

and Paris, see note 26.

⁵⁷ This is particularly striking in the Visitation of the Lautenbach High Altar (Renchtal) of 1510-15; cf. Fig. 52 in R. KAHSNITZ, *Die großen Schnitzaltäre: Spätgotik in Süddeutschland, Österreich und Südtirol* (Munich, 2005).

.2.
adi 22. nouember i 499. ein selhamen
staadung. laut der roet lauf. am 9. febr.
da sag ich 9. stünd im verigicht d. man
maint ich roet gestorden: waer einge-
net. gen tant v. leus tragen: tale
mirs agnet nach: ich rürte ein fuß



2. lax 9 monet mei aetee



Fig. 9 Andrea Mantegna, *Presentation of Christ in the temple* (c. 1465). Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

← **Fig. 8** Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (1519-1560), Fig. 2. Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Inv H. 27: 67a

is not a difference between ‘culture’ and ‘nature’, as Mentges assumes,⁵⁸ but rather a difference between man in the earthly time of culture (understood as a group of artificial places and objects) and man in the time of salvation. Body and costume are to some degree equal in their specification of individual ‘time’, but not in their specification of functions and tasks in time. There is an analogy to the above-mentioned metaphor of the chameleon of Pico della Mirandola: Schwarz tells us that on a journey he misled and escaped some brigands by turning his clothes inside out, which had a different colour on the

⁵⁸ MENTGES, “Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man in Germany”, p. 25.



• 79 •

Vilt octbro 24 die gosen mit Braun
vnd weiszende aber den roet gro schma
in einer gosed schaff wie di 14 die d
dz bier vnd gosen gro gatt dz bier wagen
die niem ganz samatin pöstru 24 L



1282 iax 8 tag

← **Fig. 10a-b** Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (1519-1560), Figs. 74-75. Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Inv H. 27: 67a

inside (*Trachtenbuch* Figs. 74 and 75, here Figs. 10a and b). Here there is also a moment of iconological self-reflection: the original costume (Fig. 74 = 10a) is depicted on a *recto* page, whereas the same costume turned inside out (Fig. costume inside out during the journey is meant to deceive the robbers, the turning of the pages in the *Trachtenbuch* is meant to assure himself of the course of time.

The turned costume can lie, whereas the naked body cannot. That is why his turning of the body in the naked figures (79 and 80) is different from the turning of the clothes (74 and 75). Self-fashioning via clothing is a different means and has different functions compared with self-fashioning via *christoformitas*. For Schwarz, fashion is not only a means to “manage and structure his biographical time”⁵⁹ but to link his personal lifetime to the general chronometric lifetime. With his clothed body he is a projection screen for chronometric time; as such he is a witness of time. The clothed body and the naked body are different clocks important for Schwarz: the naked body is his salvation clock. In the costume of the flesh he is a Christological witness.

Geographical, Temporal and Cosmological Orders

If one adduces later sources, another explanation reveals itself for the naked pictures, which in my opinion is merely secondary, because it is unable to explain the two-sidedness of the nudes. In the second half of the sixteenth century the figure of a naked German, Frenchman, or European can be found in written and / or painted representations of national dress habits and codes. In Johann Fischart’s *Geschichtsklitterung* of 1570, based on and expanding Rabelais’s *Gargantua*, the Turkish ‘emperor’ Selim is said to have had costume images made for all nationalities, except for the Germans and the French, whom he had depicted naked with balls of cloth under their arms, because he did not understand their *Formularbücher*, that is their published dress codes.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ MENTGES, “Fashion, time and consumption of a Renaissance man in Germany”, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Johann Fischart, *Affentheurlich Naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung* (Strassbourg, 1590), chapter 23, p. 229: “Derhalben that er, wie der Türckisch Keyser Selim, welcher als er aller Nationen kleidung het malen lassen, unnd an den Teutschen und Frantzosen kam, wußt er nit was er denselbigen für ein latz machen solt: derhalben ließ er sie nackend malen, unnd ihnen

Fischart uses this passage about the clothing of the sophist, Herr von Bruchmatt, in Chapter 23 to deliver a sharp criticism of dress codes, to the effect that that they are the invention of the devil. Fischart's naked German among the national portraits is not an isolated example. Until the nineteenth century, the Leipzig Rathaus (Town Hall) showed an embroidered carpet made in 1571 with several national portraits;⁶¹ here too the German is naked and carrying cloth under his arm. Beneath the portraits there is an inscription that runs the entire length of the carpet summarising the contents of the work:

Look upon these images
How strange it is in the world
With clothing everywhere
And no-one adheres to his rank
It was not like this in the old days
As you can read in the old history books.⁶²

The individual inscription that describes the naked German, who is depicted against a black (!) background, says that the German likes the clothings of all nations and so does not know which type he should choose in order to appear like a hero in the world: he will therefore go to the tailor to show him the thing itself.⁶³ An inscription in the spirit of Matthäus Schwarz, one is tempted to say. Rublack interprets the topos of the naked man (with the cloth and scissors under his arm) as a characterisation of a “loss of identity”, “cultural nudity”

ein ballen thuch mit elen unnd spissen außzumessen geben, darauß möchten sie ihnen latz unnd gsäß machen so wunderfundsam unnd so oft veränderlich wie sie ihmer wolten: Dann der Teuffel mahl oder schreib disen fundschwangern Kleidfuhrerern und hosenquartierern ein Formularbuch von kleidern für, wie man wol heut den Notariis fürkauet unnd fürspeiet: Ja wie die Cantzelärmel der unformularigen und unconcordirenden Welt heut Gebett Formular vorschreiben”.

⁶¹ Leipzig, Grassimuseum. See C. GURLITT, *Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Königreichs Sachsen*, 18, *Stadt Leipzig* (Dresden, 1896), pp. 324-327, and RUBLACK, *Dressing Up*, p. 144. I am grateful to Ruth Slenczka for the reference to the carpet.

⁶² GURLITT, *Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Königreichs Sachsen*, p. 325: “SO . SCHAV . NVN . DISE . BILTNIS . AN § WIE . SELTZAM . ES . IN . DER . WELT . TVT . STAN § MIT . DER . KLEIDVNG . DVRCH . ALLE . HANT § HELT . SICH . AVCH . NIEMANT . NACH . SEINEM . STANT § DANN . ES . VOR . ALTERS . SO . NICHT . GEWEST . IST . § WIE . MAN . IN . ALTEN . HISTORIEN . LIST §”.

⁶³ GURLITT, *Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler des Königreichs Sachsen*, p. 327: “SO . BIN . ICH . DER . HOHE . DEVTSCH . GENAN . / ALLER . NATION . KLEIDVNG . GEFELT . MIR . WOL . / WEIS . DOCH . NICHT . WIE . ICHS . MACHEN . SOL . / MIR . DOCH . EINE . BAS . DAN . DIE . ANDERE . GEFELT . / DA . MIT . ICH . EIN . ANSEHEN . HAB . ALS . EIN . HELT . / SO . WIL . ICH . HIN . ZUM . WERCKMAN . GAN . / VND . IM . DIE . SACHE . SELBER . ZEIGEN . AN”.

and a diversity that Europeans supposedly feared in the face of non-Europeans' "clear customs and stable societies". On the other hand, Rublack points out the naked European on the frontispiece of Hans Weigel's *Trachtenbuch* who is set beside the clothed figures of Asia, America and Africa: "Yet this naked personification of Europe is also depicted as strong and confidently moving forward in his predicament. He is open to change".⁶⁴ So the impossibility of finding an appropriate costume to characterise a European nation or Europe itself could have had the positive connotation of a civilisation which obtains its cultural and political hegemony precisely due to accelerated change, productivity and new inventions. One could compare the nakedness in Schwartz' *Trachtenbuch* and the nakedness of these later figures insofar as they both stand for a potential to change at will.

Schwartz also has a strong feeling for national fashions, as already noted by Fink: "The young Augsburger is happy to wear the tabard, which is becoming popular in Milan, has himself decked out 'à la française' (I 24) and throws a Spanish cap over his Lombard Sayon".⁶⁵ On 2 October 1516 he comments that the costume shown was "*mein erste klaidung wider auf theutsch zu Augspurg*" ("my first German clothes once again at Augsburg") after his stay in Italy. The interesting thing here is that the representation of clothes of different ages and nationalities results in a self-location and self-knowledge, as in the later work *Habiti antichi e moderni di tutto il mondo* by Cesare Vecellio, published in Venice in 1598,⁶⁶ where a "visual order of time and space" can be seen in the costumes.⁶⁷ The blending of the otherness of the ancient costume and the otherness of the foreign costume shows how archaeological and ethnological concepts even in this period are mutually beneficial.

The wealth of images and complex interaction with the visual arts, developed by Schwarz in the *Trachtenbuch* in order to stylise himself as a witness of time, cannot be fully considered in this article. Figs. 68, 69 and 70 (Fig. 2), in which he has himself represented three times in various tunics, are done in the style of Raffaello's *Le Tre Grazie* (The Three Graces) (Fig. 11). The three Charities or Graces, the daughters of Zeus named Euphrosyne, Thalia and Aglaia (Joy, Good Cheer, Splendour), stand for the Golden Age. Here Schwarz

⁶⁴ RUBLACK, *Dressing Up*, pp. 144 and 149, fig. 84.

⁶⁵ FINK, *Die Schwarzschen Trachtenbücher*, p. 91: "Der junge Augsburger trägt wohlgefallig den in Mailand gerade beliebt werdenden Wappenrock, läßt sich 'auf Französisch' ausstaffieren (I 24) und wirft über den lombardischen Sayon eine spanische Kappe".

⁶⁶ Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi e moderni di tutto il mondo* (Venice, 1598).

⁶⁷ BELFANTI, "The civilization of fashion", p. 264.



Fig 11 Raffaello, *The Three Graces* (1504). Chantilly, Musée Condé

is not represented naked as in the model, but rather in triple variation wearing an undergarment without a jerkin. The garlands woven into his hair remind us of the hair garlands of the Three Graces of Raffaello. In addition, the figure on the left is holding a small red ball like the Graces. This page now no longer corresponds to any social situation requiring a particular style of dress but rather shows Schwarz as a figure in a composition in which the ideas of a somewhat timeless mythical age are superimposed on those of time-dependent fashions. More attention has to be paid to pages of this sort if one wishes to

trace the idea behind and concept of the *Trachtenbuch*. Here too 'time' is in play: the central figure is wearing a timepiece of eight minutes ("von 8 minuth"), as the inscription points out.

Schwarz finished the *Trachtenbuch* the day that Anton Fugger died.

On 16 September 1560 this was my clothing, as my gracious master, Anton Fugger of blessed memory, died on fourteenth of the same month at 8 o'clock in the morning. Was 63 ½ years and 25 days old. This 137th image is unlike the 86th image.

The 86th image shows the costume Schwarz wore at Anton Fugger's wedding. The indication that the image of the mourning dress and the image of the wedding dress are different is one of the passages in the *Trachtenbuch* that reveals a kind of self-reflection in the programme of the *Trachtenbuch*, because he writes: "one image is unlike the other" and not "one costume is unlike the other". The next page without any image is written in an almost melancholy, reflective tone on Anton's death, but only the first few lines are legible, repeating the text of the last figure in parts:

On 14 September 1560 Anton Fugger of blessed memory died aged 67 years, three months and four days ... I being 63 years, six months and 25 days. His Grace, on that day, was three years, eight months and 11 days older than myself at that time. And this costume is of a different colour from the one in image 86 on Anton's wedding ...

He is reflecting here upon periods of time, youth, old age, transitoriness, and he uses the comparison of images and colours to indicate the passage of time. The images stand for marriage and death, both of which are associated with the sacraments. The difference between them marks the period of time and the emotions associated with the occasion. The clothing reveals the time and the valence of the events of both. It may be true that, for the first time, Schwarz confronts us with an idea of *vanitas*, 'vanity', and a very individually formulated *memento mori*. But on the whole it can be said that his idea of time is comparable to that of Pico della Mirandola, who sees man as the link between transient time and eternal time.

A final look at the *Trachtenbuch* will show once again the importance of the time periods. On 14 May 1542 Schwarz swore an oath of moderation, together with two godfathers of his son, which was to last for one year. Schwarz



Fig. 12 Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz (1519-1560), Figs. 123 and 124. Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum, Inv H. 27: 67a

has the first day of this oath period and the first day after the oath period (fourteenth May 1543) represented in the appropriate fashion (*Trachtenbuch* Figs. 123 and 124, here Fig. 12). Here, in his own inimitable way, he inscribes himself into a social order: an oath of moderation may be something quite common and suitable. A pictorial presentation of this sort is, on the other hand, highly individual and serves the function of the *Trachtenbuch* to inscribe himself as a distinctive element within a social and temporal order. The oath of moderation extends also to moderation in clothing that is, time and again, required by dress codes: in this year there is no ostentatious robe, not even for his birthday. In view of these considerations, let us take another look at Matthäus's portrait by Hans Maler. There now no longer seems to be any need to explain why he



Fig. 13 Christoph Amberger, *Portrait of Matthäus Schwarz* (1542). Madrid, Museum Thyssen-Bornemisza

has a clock and an hourglass around his neck.⁶⁸ It is also important to note here that he has himself portrayed as a sanguine type, which is indicated not only by his harmonious physiognomy but by the lute, which is a traditional attribute for the sanguine type. The humorous pathology which was decisive for the model of the four temperaments was combined with the cosmological orders. Schwarz's commitment with factors of time and cosmological orders and his self-characterisation as a sanguine type is clarified in another passage, in the later portrait done by Christoph Amberger (Fig. 13). It shows Schwarz as a half figure in three-quarters view in front of a green curtain. His clothing is much more restrained than many of the costumes in the *Trachtenbuch*: he is wearing a black doublet, and only small items of adornment such as the red stomacher, and the embroidered gold braid on the collar and the net hood. The belt holds a dagger and a gold case with a pearl-inlaid tooth pick. On the table, upon which he rests his left arm, there are two books which are often explained in connection with his bookkeeping activities. However, I think that they refer to works of astronomy that are related to the unusual representation of the window.

Interiors that portray a window opening onto a landscape became common from the fifteenth century onwards. This window, however, connects exterior and interior in a special way. It opens on to a landscape suggesting distance, over which a large sun with an aureole is shining. Directly in front of the sun is Matthäus's horoscope, a horoscope diagram that gives the year 1542, written in a thin golden line on the glass of the window. On the window sill, next to a wine glass, there is a note on which various calendrical and astrological data are recorded. Instead of an artist's signature we find the signature of the client: Matthäus Schwarz the Elder has had himself portrayed (SIBI IPSI F(ieri) F(ecit)). The quill is lying on the closed book: thus I propose that the open book is the work of astronomy used by Schwarz to portray his nativity, the horoscope compiled by himself. The portrait betrays a true obsession with regard to time and age. The inscription not only specifies that Matthäus Schwarz the Elder had this picture painted, but it also gives his date of birth (6.30 p.m. on 19 February 1497), the exact moment of the creation of the painting (4.15 p.m. on 22 March 1542) and his age (45 years 30 days and 21¼ hours). Of course we know that a picture is not produced at exactly one moment of time, which would make this time constellation a fiction. The position of the sun might

⁶⁸ Perhaps it might even be assumed that the clock stands for the chronological time and the hourglass for the cyclical time (of salvation).

correspond to the time specified and moreover suggests a solar eclipse. In any case, Matthäus sets himself in a relationship to the stars and planets by placing his nativity on the transparent disc in front of the sun.

Aby Warburg writes about the astrology and geomantics of the sixteenth century:

The ancient gods belonged as cosmic demons uninterruptedly from the end of classical Antiquity to the religious powers of Christian Europe and determined its practical shaping of life so incisively that it is impossible to deny an auxiliary regiment of pagan cosmology silently tolerated by the Christian Church, in particular of astrology.⁶⁹

In the Reformation period the engagement with mantics, the *divinatio artificialis et naturalis*, takes on peculiar forms which in part result in very ‘unholy’ alliances between the confessions. Melanchthon was on very cordial terms and had extensive correspondence with the Catholic Italian astrologer Lucas Gauricus who not only prophesied the “downfall of the heretic Luther” but also suggested a positively devastating nativity of Martin Luther, together with a propagandist baiting campaign against the Reformation. He had to shift Luther’s date of birth from 10 November 1483 to 22 October 1484, a year with particular planetary constellations. In that year there was a great conjunction of Jupiter and Mars, which in Gauricus’s opinion announced the coming of the Antichrist Luther. Melanchthon then had several horoscopes made that were supposed to calculate Luther’s correct date of birth. In the pre-modern period it was believed that the physiognomy and nature of people depended on the distribution of the bodily fluids, and that this distribution in turn was determined by the planetary constellation at their birth. Thus the visual nature, constitution, character, and prominence of a man reveal his identity, which has to be manifest in a horoscope by which can be calculated by the date of birth. The horoscope, with its predictions based on the assumed character of a man, thus represents a higher truth than the transmission of a date of birth that is not as reliable as the horoscope fitting to the character. So in the end Melanchthon

⁶⁹ A. WARBURG, “Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten” (1920), in: ID., *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*, ed. D. WUTKE (Baden-Baden, 1992), pp. 199-304, at p. 202: “... denn als kosmische Dämonen gehörten die antiken Götter ununterbrochen seit dem Ausgange des Altertums zu den religiösen Mächten des christlichen Europa und bedingten dessen praktische Lebensgestaltung so einschneidend, daß man ein von der christlichen Kirche stillschweigend geduldetes Nebenregiment der heidnischen Kosmologie, insbesondere der Astrologie, nicht leugnen kann”.

adheres to the nativity drawn up by Gauricus, with a slightly 'de-demonising' displacement, but he also adheres to the year of the great conjunction of planets. The early modern conception of history

in its theory of epochs is decisively connected with the appearance of certain planetary conjunctions in certain periods that a new prophet received his cosmological sanctification only with the conjunction of upper planets, especially Saturn and Jupiter.⁷⁰

The conjunction makes the man.

Matthäus Schwarz is portrayed twice in Amberger's painting: once in his visible corporeal form and once with his horoscope shining in front of the sun. Image and horoscope probably connect his life with a special celestial appearance. So far I have not discovered whether there was a solar eclipse at the time of the painting ("*depictae imaginis*"). But it is more important that it is once again an image by way of which Matthäus Schwarz positions himself in a cosmological and temporal order. The glass of red wine as well as the repetition of the red colour on the inside of the clothing might refer to the sanguine type. This could be a second reason to choose the time of the making of the painting, that is one day after the beginning of spring. Spring is the season of the sanguine type, when the blood that is dominant in his complexion surges and provides the body with new energy.⁷¹ Here too it becomes clear that, in all properties Schwarz ascribes to himself, the world, the cosmos, time, and salvation history become the image of knowledge in a unique mirror.

Conclusion

Even if Stephen Greenblatt thinks that the fashioning of characters in literature is not that much different from the fashioning in social life, in agreement with the arguments of Clifford Geertz that ultimately man too is a cultural

⁷⁰ WARBURG, "Heidnisch-antike Weissagung", p. 222: "[*die Geschichtskonzeption ist*] in ihrer Epochenlehre so entscheidend an das Auftreten von gewissen Planetenkonjunktionen in bestimmten Zeiträumen geknüpft, daß ein neuer Prophet erst durch das Zusammentreffen von oberen Planeten, vor allem von Saturn und Jupiter, seine kosmologische Weihe erhielt".

⁷¹ G.L. NOTARP, *Von Heiterkeit, Zorn, Schwermut und Lethargie: Studien zur Ikonographie der vier Temperamente in der niederländischen Serien- und Genregraphik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster, 1998), p. 71.

artifact,⁷² it is still not possible to equate these modes of fashioning with each other.⁷³ In Schwarz's case this can be described very easily: in real life his clothing had the function of underlining his important social position, his various functions, and the taste and prosperity that accompany them. In the *Trachtenbuch*, on the other hand, where it is possible to see the clothing of his life in synopsis, Schwarz is merely a witness of time, and he is fashioning his body in both chronometric time and in the time of salvation. Through an analysis of the pictures it is not really possible to judge the factual individual position of Schwarz in society. If we wish to historicise concepts of individuality, without falling into the clichés concerning the 'birth of the individual' of earlier research, then it is necessary to, first, "*Selbstzeugnisse in ihren eigenen Kontexten zu erschließen*" ("investigate self-narratives in their contexts")⁷⁴ and, secondly, to take seriously the mediality of the texts and images in the sense of their staging strategies. On the basis of the images and texts generated by Schwarz it can merely be said how he models and shapes himself in visual self-narrative terms. He develops techniques very creatively and individually for staging and determining himself, and for finding his very own place in a matrix of social, religious, temporal and cosmological orders. The intention of this study is to demonstrate how Matthäus Schwarz is constructing an image of himself as a man with a special and distinctive identity, as a unique mirror of time and social circumstances. One last time I refer to Pico della Mirandola: Matthäus proves to be the creator of himself and a chameleon that can change form and colour at will in different contexts. At least as the creator of the images he designs himself as the man conceived by Pico, the man with a free will and the license to give form to the world and to himself. The pictorial body of Matthäus Schwarz is a carrier of symbols: symbols of changing fashion and

⁷² GREENBLATT, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 3.

⁷³ Cf. LUMME, *Höllenfleisch und Heiligtum*, pp. 14-15: "*Der Ich-Entwurf, den der jeweilige Autor seinen Adressaten übermittelt, spiegelt also weniger seine soziale Position, noch liefert er das genaue Abbild seines Selbstverständnisses: Das Bild, das jemand von sich hat, unterscheidet sich von dem Selbstbild, das er für andere entwirft*" ("The I-creation transmitted by an author to his readership does thus not very much reflect his social position and does not provide the entire image of his self-understanding: The image that someone has of himself differs from the self-image that he creates for others").

⁷⁴ G. JANCKE et al., "Introduction", in *Vom Individuum zur Person: Neue Konzepte im Spannungsfeld von Autobiographietheorie und Selbstzeugnisforschung*, ed. G. JANCKE et al. (Göttingen, 2005: *Querelles: Jahrbuch für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* 10), pp. 7-27, at p. 17.

symbols of christoform nakedness.⁷⁵ In addition, the body becomes the sense-giving *figura* of pictorial compositions, as in the model of the Three Graces. As a result, the body is assigned a special role in the *Trachtenbuch* of Matthäus Schwarz. He is a witness of a larger context, witness of time, and a witness of (salvation) history that can be read in his person.

⁷⁵ G. PILLER, *Private Körper: Spuren des Leibes in Selbstzeugnissen des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 2007), pp. 36-37.

Dialogue Situations: Considerations on Self-Identification in the Middle Ages

SABINE SCHMOLINSKY

May I introduce myself? This phrase of everyday life particularly aims at a dialogue situation. But, however obvious this question might appear, who is 'I', how far does he or she unveil 'his / herself', and to what degree may an identity of 'I' and 'myself' be claimed?

Words and Concepts

The concept of 'dialogue situation' is intended to denote a kind of communication taking place or pretending to take place among present participants.¹ 'Dialogue situation' may include a certain inevitability considering the situative necessity of responding, but it does not claim any limitations on the number of participants. Frequently, however, these will be two. Thus the term 'dia-

¹ 'Dialogue situation' thus appears to be a specific type of communication among present persons, according to A. KIESERLING, *Kommunikation unter Anwesenden: Studien über Interaktionssysteme* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 15-17, 24-26.

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Forms of Individuality and Literacy in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, ed. F.-J. ARLINGHAUS, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 303-317.

logue situation' privileges the situativity of face-to-face communication as an underlying structure of communicative speech.² In terms of their contents, dialogue situations may move on a scale from topically focussed subjects of communication to a self-referential exchange of the participants. Here, types of dialogue situations matter which include items of personal self-identification of one or more of the participants. It is presupposed that these items result from constructive processes of (self-) representation on textual levels and refer to persons thought to be real or potentially real. The types of orally connoted dialogue situations comprising traits of self-reflexivity may vary from voluntary conversation, perhaps bearing marks of a respectful or friendly atmosphere among the participants, to all sorts of examination resulting from a difference of power and the subjugation of one side of the participating persons to the other.

As a seminal type of dialogue situation, which occurs in all cases of communicative situations, the mentioning of one's own name may be proposed.³ This small but basic piece of self-identification appears to be a fundamental act of constructing one's own identity, since it produces the possibility of reference to a person by the others within the group of participants. Being able to call someone by his or her name means being able to refer to him or her without just describing external traits like 'wearing a red pullover'. Thus, mentioning one's own name is the basic unit of self-identification in a real or fictitious dialogue situation and thereby the basic type of a self-testimony or ego-document in Rudolf Dekker's use of the term, which is close to *Selbstzeugnis*.⁴

² For recent linguistic perspectives see P.J. THIBAUT, "Face-to-face communication and body language", in: *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*, ed. G. ANTOS and E. VENTOLA (Berlin and New York, 2008), pp. 285-330. For late medieval naming practices see Ch. ROLKER, "'Ich, Anna Hartzlerin, genannt von Maegelsperg ...': Namensführung und weibliche Identität in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt", *L'Homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 20.1 (2009), pp. 17-34.

³ For recent research on personal names see the various contributions in: *Personennamen und Identität: Namengebung und Namengebrauch als Anzeiger individueller Bestimmung und gruppenbezogener Zuordnung: Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter", Friesach (Kärnten), 25. bis 29. September 1995*, ed. R. HÄRTEL (Graz, 1997).

⁴ R. DEKKER, "Introduction", in: *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in its Social Context since the Middle Ages*, ed. R. DEKKER (Hilversum, 2002), pp. 7-20, at p. 13, with reference to B. VON KRUSENSTJERN, "Was sind Selbstzeugnisse? Begriffskritische und quellenkundliche Überlegungen anhand von Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert", *Historische Anthropologie* 2 (1994), pp. 462-471; cf. S. SCHMOLINSKY, "Selbstzeugnisse finden oder: Zur Überlieferung erinnelter Erfahrung im Mittelalter", in: *Self-Fashioning / Personen(selbst)darstellung*, ed. R. SUNTRUP and J.R. VEENSTRA (Frankfurt am Main etc., 2003), pp. 23-49, at pp. 29-31; B. SCHMID, *Schreiben für Status und Herrschaft: Deutsche Autobiographik in Spätmittelalter und*

Doing Memory: A Fictitious Dialogue and the 'Real' World

Medieval dialogues, in the textual sense of the word according to rhetoric, do not necessarily present the participants providing self-referential material. In fact, they usually do not. Frequently they just offer rare hints at identity markers hidden in short remarks made in passing.⁵ This common constellation may be illustrated by a dialogue which appears to be performed by two, then three speakers, gathered to praise the late humanist and famous teacher Vittorino Rambaldoni da Feltre (c. 1378-1446), who had founded the school *Casa Giocosa* at the Mantuan court of the Gonzaga in 1423.⁶ The author of this arrangement is Francesco Prendilacqua (c. 1420-after 1483), writing shortly before February 1470, the *terminus post quem* being January 1466.⁷

Prendilacqua addresses his work to one of the most distinguished of Vittorino's students, Federico da Montefeltro (1422-1482), the ruler of Urbino from 1444.⁸ In his dedication letter, as *collocutores* "*grauissimos atque amplissimos uiros colloquentes inter se quasi praesentes*" he introduces the – then late – prince Alexander Gonzaga († 16 January 1466),⁹ son of Gianfrancesco I. Gonzaga, Margrave of Mantova (1395-1444), the jurist Raimundus Lupus and the knight Franciscus Calcagninus. The author first makes his audience listen to a discussion on the qualities of pain (*dolor*) between Alexander and Raimundus. Pain being attributed to Alexander, his amply debated per-

früher Neuzeit (Zürich, 2006), pp. 15 f. For *Selbstzeugnisse* in the Middle Ages, see now S. SCHMOLINSKY, *Sich schreiben in der Welt des Mittelalters: Begriffe und Konturen einer mediävistischen Selbstzeugnisforschung* (Bochum, 2012).

⁵ On types of participants in philosophical dialogues see K. JACOBI, "Einleitung", in: *Gespräche lesen: Philosophische Dialoge im Mittelalter*, ed. K. JACOBI (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 9-22, at pp. 15-18. C. CARDELLE DE HARTMANN, *Lateinische Dialoge 1200-1400: Literaturhistorische Studie und Repertorium* (Leiden, 2007), p. 285, notes that only scarce remnants of orality may be found in dialogues being primarily patterns of written communication. For humanist consolation dialogues in Prendilacqua's times, see Ch. KIENING, "Humanistische Trostdialoge des 15. Jahrhunderts", in: *Gespräche – Boten – Briefe: Körpergedächtnis und Schriftgedächtnis im Mittelalter*, ed. H. WENZEL (Berlin, 1997), pp. 320-343. Another case of literary dialogue situation, constituted within contemporary practices of sending messengers, has been observed in the French *Chansons de geste*; cf. J.-Cl. VALLECALLE, *Messages et ambassades dans l'épopée française médiévale: L'illusion du dialogue* (Paris, 2006).

⁶ A.-S. GÖING, *Die Lebensbilder zu Vittorino da Feltre: Studien zur Rezeption einer Erzieherpersönlichkeit im Italien des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1999), pp. 23, 29 f., 37-45.

⁷ GÖING, *Die Lebensbilder*, pp. 32, 210 f.; for the author's life, see pp. 213-216.

⁸ B. ROECK and A. TÖNNESMANN, *Die Nase Italiens: Federico da Montefeltro, Herzog von Urbino* (Berlin, 2005); GÖING, *Die Lebensbilder*, pp. 216-219.

⁹ For Prendilacqua's characterisation of Alexander see GÖING, *Die Lebensbilder*, pp. 55 f.

sonal *dolor* finally leads to the commemoration of Vittorino on the anniversary of his death.¹⁰ This offers the opportunity to Raimundus to identify Alexander as a student of Vittorino, to whom he had been attached “*diuturna illius familiaritate*”.¹¹ Alexander agrees. Later on it will be his part to introduce the third participant, Franciscus Calcagninus, referring to the latter’s *auctoritas*, and to his having been a student and friend of Vittorino in former times, as well as being a friend of Alexander now.¹² It will be Alexander’s part, too, to identify Raimundus as a member of a noble family resident in several Italian towns and to praise his erudition and qualities.¹³

These conversational shifts may point to a type of dialogue situation which is characterised by the absence of personal self-identification, in order to be introduced by others in a fictitious face-to-face communication. The amply mentioned family relations, qualities and abilities of the participants, however, explicitly refer to common grounds and standards which apply to the non-fictitious social and erudite world of Prendilacqua’s times. Had those been applied by the *collocutores* to themselves, it might yet be doubted whether that mode of literary self-description should be interpreted as being hetero-referential. It may be questioned whether something should be called ‘hetero-’ which is shared by at least one discourse community including the ‘I’.

Living in Dialogue Situations: Family Letters

Close to dialogues, letters configure a type of dialogue situation which in rhetoric is marked by the absence of the participants.¹⁴ Thus, letters apply to

¹⁰ GÖING, *Die Lebensbilder*, pp. 223-225.

¹¹ *Il pensiero pedagogico dello Umanesimo*, ed. E. GARIN (Florence, 1958), p. 570.

¹² *Il pensiero pedagogico*, pp. 572, 574.

¹³ *Il pensiero pedagogico*, pp. 578, 580.

¹⁴ Since antiquity a letter was regarded as one half of a dialogue with an absent counterpart, cf. W.G. MÜLLER, “Brief”, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. G. UEDING, 11 vols. (Tübingen, 2001-2014), 2, col. 60-76, at col. 61; U. KÜHNE, “Brieftheoretisches in mittelalterlichen Briefen”, *Romanische Forschungen* 109 (1997), pp. 1-23, at p. 2; H. WENZEL, “Luthers Briefe im Medienwechsel von der Manuskriptkultur zum Buchdruck”, in: *Audiovisualität vor und nach Gutenberg: Zur Kulturgeschichte der medialen Umbrüche*, ed. H. WENZEL *et al.* (Vienna, 2001), pp. 185-201, at pp. 187-189. Cf. J. HEROLD, “Computerphilologie als Methode für die historisch-quellenkundliche Erschließung spätmittelalterlicher Briefe”, in: *Ad Fontes! Quellen erfassen – lesen – deuten: Was ist Computerphilologie? Ansatzpunkte und Methodologie – Instrumente und Praxis: Contributions to the Conference “Computerphilologie”, November 5 – 8, 1998, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald*, ed. by Ch. HARDMEIER *et al.* (Amsterdam,

the concept's trait of pretending a face-to-face communication which, however, takes place among absent participants who, often explicitly, have changed their medium by switching from orality to script. Orality again may be involved in the subsequent transmission process if letters are read aloud, e.g. in case of illiterate addressees, or if a messenger has to communicate an oral message in addition to a letter he has submitted.¹⁵

This feature of shifted dialogic media may be observed in the case of the Low German family correspondence of the Gotschalck family, which has been preserved, though incompletely,¹⁶ for the years 1527 to 1551.¹⁷ As far as we know, this family had its origins in Goslar in the north of the Harz mountains in Lower Saxony. There the widowed mother Adelheit received letters from her four sons Cyriacus, Autor, Franz and Jürgen, who had left the town for professional reasons. Wandering eastward they all learned the trade of goldsmith. Being settled or at least more stabilised, their letters most often were sent between Goslar, Liegnitz west of Wrocław (Breslau) in Silesia, Wrocław, and some other towns.¹⁸ Although it is unknown how many of them must be considered lost, frequencies of writing a letter can be deduced from identificatory acts and sometimes the content.

2000), pp. 129-148, at pp. 133 f. for the letter form replacing the non-verbal aspects of oral communication.

¹⁵ Cf. R. KÖHN, "Dimensionen und Funktionen des Öffentlichen und Privaten in der mittelalterlichen Korrespondenz", in: *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne*, ed. G. MELVILLE and P. VON MOOS (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 1998), pp. 309-357, at pp. 312-319; H. WENZEL, "Boten und Briefe: Zum Verhältnis körperlicher und nichtkörperlicher Nachrichtenträger", in: *Gespräche – Boten – Briefe*, pp. 86-105.

¹⁶ Even the correspondence of a late medieval noble family was far less carefully preserved than their charters; cf. J. MORSEL, "Brief und schrift: Überlegungen zu den sozialen Grundlagen schriftlichen Austauschs im Spätmittelalter am Beispiel Frankens", in: *›Textus‹ im Mittelalter: Komponenten und Situationen des Wortgebrauchs im schriftsemantischen Feld*, ed. L. KUCHENBUCH and U. KLEINE (Göttingen, 2006), pp. 285-321, at pp. 304-307.

¹⁷ For vernacular private letters, see *Deutsche Privatbriefe des Mittelalters*, 1, *Fürsten und Magnaten, Edle und Ritter*, and 2, *Geistliche – Bürger 1*, ed. G. STEINHAUSEN (Berlin, 1899 and 1907); cf. G. STEINHAUSEN, *Geschichte des deutschen Briefes: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Volkes 1* (Berlin, 1889; repr. Dublin and Zürich, 1968). For family letters, see M. BEER, *Eltern und Kinder des späten Mittelalters in ihren Briefen: Familienleben in der Stadt des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Nürnbergs (1400-1550)* (Nuremberg, 1990).

¹⁸ "Die Briefe der Brüder Gottschalk aus Goslar", ed. G. CORDES, in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung*, 63-64 (1937-1938), pp. 59-72; cf. G. CORDES, *Schriftwesen und Schriftsprache in Goslar bis zur Aufnahme der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache* (Hamburg, 1934), pp. 37 f., 82 f. The spelling of the name varies according to the contemporary use.

The dialogue situation between the family members obviously is marked by the former common family life and the still existing, emotionally tinged family relations. When addressing their mother, the sons used but the familiar formulas of childlike love, e.g. "*Kynthliche leve myth underdanige truwe tevorn*" ("Childlike love with submissive faith before"), or: "*Muterlyge leve zufen. Men leber muter yr schults wyszen ...*" ("Love to my mother before. My dear mother you ought to know ...").¹⁹ When addressing each other, the formula could be "*Broderliche truwe zwvoren. Lybe broder wysse ...*" ("Brotherly faith before. Dear brother you should know ...").²⁰ When the eldest son Cyriacus told his mother that he had married a young widow, he did not introduce the latter by her name or family but by her property: "... *das ich eyne junge wyttwe genomen habe zw Lygnytz ... un habe myt ir gekrygen huesz und hoff und als was darzw gehoret, das myr nycht eyn pffeynich kostet ...*" ("... that I have married a young widow in Liegnitz ... and have gained with her a house and all that belongs to it, which does not cost me a penny ...").²¹ Anonymously his wife stayed present in his letters and, as far as we know, it was not until he had died that his wife wrote to her mother-in-law: "*mein libe fraw moter, ...*", subscribing her letters with her name Anna and her denomination as Cyriacus' widow.²² There is no sign that they ever met, particularly because Adelheit had refused the former young couple's invitation to join them for the rest of her life.²³ Equally, she does not seem to have met Andreas Haunolt in Liegnitz who, in his only extant letter, identifies himself by addressing her as "*meine liebe frau schwaigerin*" ("my dear sister-in-law"). He shows himself to have felt as a father-in-law for all her sons in sequence as long as they lived and to feel so for her last surviving son Franz.²⁴ In a letter of her c. twelve years old grandson Cyriacus, which was presumably inspired by an adult, all the above mentioned elements appear: "*Kintlichen gehorsam und alles gutes zuvor. Meine libe groÙe mutter, ...*" ("Childlike obedience and all the best before. My dear grandmother ..."). He signs "*Cyriacus Gottschalk, eur Son*" ("your son") and writes for an address: "*Der tugentsamen frawen Adelheit Gotschalken zu Goßlar meiner lieben grosse mutter*" ("To the virtuous Mrs A.G. in Goslar my

¹⁹ "Die Briefe der Brüder Gottschalk", pp. 59, 68.

²⁰ "Die Briefe der Brüder Gottschalk", p. 65.

²¹ "Die Briefe der Brüder Gottschalk", p. 66 (14.6.1538).

²² "Handwerkerbriefe aus der Zeit der Reformation", ed. U. HÖLSCHER, in: *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 7 (1903), pp. 250-274, at pp. 265 f.

²³ "Die Briefe der Brüder Gottschalk", pp. 66 f.

²⁴ "Handwerkerbriefe", pp. 271 f.

dear grandmother”),²⁵ a type of address apt to confirm the identity of the youthful sender.

In these letters personal introduction, as far as it was pragmatically necessary, works through the naming of kinship relations. This result might foster the notion of hetero-referentiality for the sake of self-identification, but the use of rhetorical devices within a limited network of well-defined social relations much more indicates communicative conventions and procedures within a specified group, which generate a veil of verbal standards beyond the difference of hetero- or self-referentiality.

Creating Dialogue Situations: Hildegard of Bingen's Epistolary Corpus

It might seem as if the absence of the dialogue partners, who are imagined as present in the letter situation, coincides with a certain mutability of the epistolary genre, insofar as medieval authors demonstrate a somehow creative approach to procedures of keeping letters alive. For centuries, the only way of preserving letters for posterity was to copy them and integrate them in a book. Thus the practice of copying interferes with the question of dialogue situations arising both for letter collections and for single letters. Does their inclusion in a letter collection alter their texts, and which kinds of modification may be perceived?

Having found the attention of recent research, Hildegard of Bingen's (1098-1179) epistolary corpus may serve as an example. Hildegard herself regarded her letters as a part of her literary work, since she mentioned them in a catalogue of her works at the beginning of the *Liber Vite Meritorum*.²⁶ Theoderich of Echternach, her biographer, knew “*unum volumen*” in which Hildegard's letters as well as the letters sent to her were “*compile*”.²⁷ The manuscript tradition includes several comprehensive and many smaller collec-

²⁵ “Handwerkerbriefe”, p. 273.

²⁶ Hildegardis Bingensis *Liber Vite Meritorum*, ed. A. CARLEVARIS O.S.B. (Turnhout, 1995: CCCM 90), I, p. 8.

²⁷ *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, ed. M. KLAES (Turnhout, 1993: CCCM 126), II, 1, p. 20: “*Patet etiam, quam eleganter epistolis de diuersis prouinciis ad se directis responderit, si quis tenorem uerborum eius ex reuelatione diuina prolatorum altius considerare uoluerit. Sunt autem in unum uolumen compile et sue et ille, que ad se fuerant destinate*” (“It is evident, too, how elegantly she replied to the letters addressed to her from various provinces, if somebody wished to consider more seriously the tenor of her words brought forth by divine revelation. They are, however, compiled in one volume, both her own letters and those which had been sent to her”).

tions of letters and correspondence, which in each case show particular reasons for the compilation, arrangement and presentation of the textual material.²⁸

Both strands, the so-called older and the younger tradition, go back to Hildegard's life-time. What makes them different from each other are sometimes strong interferences with the texts. These interventions frequently led to new letters being compiled from several texts of the older tradition. Addressees may have been altered, and new names have been included. Monika Klaes, who has scrutinised the manuscript tradition most intensely, has deduced four principles regulating the shaping of the younger epistolary tradition, namely their structure as a mirror for prelates, their hierarchic letter sequence down from popes to simple monks, the presentation of complete correspondences centring on a Hildegard who reacts to questions of various addressees, and the limitation to one correspondence per addressee.²⁹

Hildegard's correspondence obviously was configured according to the intention to present her as a recipient of letters of all popes in the Holy See since 1145, the initiative of corresponding being assigned to the popes. The papal letters of the younger tradition were forged or modified, with the exception of one letter by Pope Alexander III which, however, had originally been addressed to Provost Wezzelin of St. Andreas in Cologne. The older tradition's focus on Hildegard's letters to Pope Eugen III is blurred. Modifications often concern the addressees. Thus the archbishops of Cologne appear to be Hildegard's correspondents only in the younger epistolary tradition, whereas the older one does not know a single letter by them. There is a correspondence with Archbishop Philipp of Cologne dated 1167-1173, preceded by a letter exchange with Arnold, who was archbishop of Cologne from 1151 to 1156. In the latter case Hildegard's letter was composed of three former writings to laymen plus a concluding sentence.³⁰ The majority of her letters to women were readdressed – mostly to men – and compiled with others.³¹

²⁸ Cf. M. EMBACH, *Die Schriften Hildegards von Bingen: Studien zu ihrer Überlieferung und Rezeption im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2003), pp. 177-251, for the reception history of Hildegard's *Epistolarium*.

²⁹ M. KLAES, "Von der Briefsammlung zum literarischen Briefbuch: Anmerkungen zur Überlieferung der Briefe Hildegards von Bingen", in: *Hildegard von Bingen: Prophetin durch die Zeiten: Zum 900. Geburtstag*, ed. E. FORSTER *et al.* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1998), pp. 153-170, esp. p. 161.

³⁰ KLAES, "Von der Briefsammlung", pp. 161 f.

³¹ KLAES, "Von der Briefsammlung", table 5, pp. 160 f.

Identities appear as variable in this laboratory of a public *persona*³² shaping herself and being shaped for the honourable memory of a living saint and Spirit-filled person.³³ They obviously were chosen according to social criteria which were supplemented, with an eye to historical plausibility, by personal identifications. This monumentalisation was partly performed by directing her dialogue situations which, through various manipulations, concentrated on the addressed others and their (constructed) enquiries. The emerging type of Hildegard's interlocutory self-reference is realised and detailed within a network of stratified communications and turns out to be the only fixed point in this interplay of changeable correspondents. As far as hetero-referentiality was imposed on their virtual existence, it was dimmed by personalisation.³⁴

Conversations in Narrations: Thietmar of Merseburg's Chronicle

Dialogue situations can be a subject of report and thus may appear in historiographical narrative. In the case of Thietmar (975-1018), bishop of Merseburg since 1009, they coexist with a certain personal approach to history which becomes manifest, e.g., in the self-referential passages of his chronicle which also include references to members of his family.³⁵ Once in those passages a dialogue situation with a historical person is told which, however, does

³² J. VAN ENGEN, "Letters and the public *persona* of Hildegard", in: *Hildegard von Bingen in ihrem historischen Umfeld: Internationaler wissenschaftlicher Kongreß zum 900jährigen Jubiläum, 13.-19. September 1998, Bingen am Rhein*, ed. A. HAVERKAMP (Mainz, 2000), pp. 375-418, at pp. 392-418.

³³ VAN ENGEN, "Letters", pp. 408-418, viewing the correspondents' approaches.

³⁴ These procedures seem to contrast with e.g. practices of erudite letter writing in the second half of the eighth and the ninth centuries; cf. A. RICCIARDI, "Le dialogue de loin: Lettres entre intellectuels à l'époque Carolingienne", in: *Epistulae Antiquae v: Actes du v^e Colloque International L'Épistolaire antique et ses prolongements Européens (Université François-Rabelais, Tours 6-7-8 septembre 2006)*, ed. P. LAURENCE and F. GUILLAUMONT (Louvain and Paris, 2008), pp. 273-290, who focuses on the various aspects of a vivid intellectual and personalised communication among distant writers and readers keeping dialogue situations alive over space and time. The article does not discuss transmission by manuscript, but it may be noted that there is at least a tradition considered to be basic for a critical edition which did not delete personal and dialogic traces in the letters.

³⁵ G. ALTHOFF, "Thietmar v. Merseburg", in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. R. AUTY et al., 10 vols. (Munich and Zurich, then Stuttgart and Weimar, 1980-1999), 8, col. 694-696; K. GÖRICH, *Otto III. Romanus Saxonicus et Italicus: Kaiserliche Rompolitik und sächsische Historiographie* (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp. 62-64, cf. p. 63: Thietmar composed his chronicle from the end of the year 1012 until his death (1 December 1018).

not present Thietmar as a speaker.³⁶ It fits his tendency to switch to direct speech in cases of vivid representation or significant circumstances.³⁷

After the Archbishop of Magdeburg, Tagino, had died in 1012, the provost and all brethren and vassals of the chapter gathered to debate the election of a successor. Thietmar, then Bishop of Merseburg and consequently one of the electors, joined them later on and was informed that the king – Henry II – had commanded them not to hold an election but to submit a unanimous proposal to him. According to his narrative, Thietmar introduced his comment on this proposition by referring to himself: “*Sum unus ex his, qui electionis huius ac consecrationis participes esse debent; et hoc vobis consilium do ...*” (“I am one of those who have to participate in his election and consecration; and I give you this advice ...”).³⁸ Thus reinforcing his legitimate affiliation to a temporarily acting, specified group within the realm of his profession, he continues by offering strong advice: with reference to the electors’ old rights he proposes to oppose the king’s order and elect the new archbishop, which is immediately accomplished.³⁹

In his report, Thietmar’s self-reference appears provoked by and embedded in situative exigencies. ‘Situativeness’, ‘situativity’ may be analysed most frequently in the various types of dialogue situations told by Thietmar. To give some examples: a dog seeing his – human – enemy bit off his right hand and left the scene. Being asked by the terrified eyewitnesses, the victim declared himself to have been punished rightly by God because he once had killed a man asleep who had been the dog’s master. The dog lately had renewed his revengeful attacks. Thietmar’s speaker concluded: “*Scio deinceps quod aut hic aut in futuro examine unusquisque reus sine subsequenti poena non latet ullatenus*” (“After that I know that neither here nor in the future judgement any accused will remain undetected and without subsequent punishment in any respect”).⁴⁰ This pious conclusion makes the story an example (*exemplum*), told by someone whose identity expires in its narrative elements without further traits of identity being supplied for him.

³⁶ Thietmar von Merseburg, *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. by R. HOLTZMANN (Berlin, 1935: MGH *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum: Nova Series* 9), VII, 34, p. 440.

³⁷ Here only those dialogue situations will be examined which are not narrated in oblique speech.

³⁸ Thietmar, *Chronik*, VI, 62, pp. 350–352, quotation at p. 352.

³⁹ Thietmar, *Chronik*, VI, 62, p. 352.

⁴⁰ Thietmar, *Chronik*, I, 27, p. 34.

Some dialogue situations in Thietmar's *Chronicle* tend to represent slightly dubious communications which, however, are not marked as being unusual. When Gero, Archbishop of Cologne, was near to death, which occurred on 29 June 976, the devil announced this future event to Abbess Gerberga, a highly esteemed friend of Gero, although he knew that she, as was her habit, would unveil the secret despite his prohibition. "*Vellem tibi meum aperire secretum, ni te scirem cuncta hactenus numquam servavisse commissa. Sed si ...*" ("I would unveil my secret to you if I did not know that you up to now have never kept [secret] all that which was entrusted to you. But if ...").⁴¹ What matters here, is that obviously the devil did not need to introduce himself. According to Thietmar, everybody seems to have recognised him immediately, and it is the author's narrative authority which calls him devil (*diabolus*). In most cases spirits and apparitions do not identify themselves within the text, even if they use conventional phrases to start the conversation.⁴² They are present in dialogue situations, and the chronicler seems to suggest that their appearance was to be considered just another type of face-to-face communication. Apparitions may demand to be given the opportunity to identify themselves, as it happens with St Laurence who appeared in a dream of Theophanu, accusing her late husband, Emperor Otto II, of having hurt him physically by suspending the diocese of Merseburg.⁴³ Oral tradition by reliable persons had conveyed an incident to Thietmar he wished to communicate to his readers: in the times of Abbot Liudolf of Corvey (965-983) a group of holy relics which felt neglected by a young monk appeared to the abbot leaving the church at night:

Cui protinus talia dicunt: "Cur non interrogas, pater, qui simus vel ob quam rem huc venissemus?" Qui cum retulisset eis, quod non auderet, audivit mox ab illis nomen eorum et causam et, quod hoc inultum non relinqueretur.

⁴¹ Thietmar, *Chronik*, III, 3, p. 100.

⁴² E.g. Thietmar, *Chronik*, VI, 76, p. 364: "*Et in hoc anno, ..., cuidam matronae venerabili mater sua [=Walterdi] iam defuncta per visum apparuit. Quae cum ab ea salutaretur et, quomodo tunc valeret, interrogaretur, respondit: 'Bene'; et adiecit: ...*" ("And in this year ... his [=Walterdus'] late mother visually appeared to a venerable lady. When she was greeted by the latter and questioned, how she was doing now, she replied: 'Well'; and added: ...").

⁴³ Thietmar, *Chronik*, IV, 10, p. 142: "*Apparuit ei intempestae noctis silentio sanctus Christi adleta Laurencius dextero mutilatus brachio: 'Cur', inquit, 'quis sim, non interrogas?' Et illa: 'Non audeo', inquit, 'domine mi!' Ille autem prosequitur: 'Ego sum' dicens et nomen innotuit*" ("In the silence of the deep night the holy *athleta Christi* Lawrence appeared to her with his right arm mutilated: 'Why', he said, 'don't you ask who I am?' She replied: 'I don't dare, my Lord!' But he continued and said: 'I am' and announced [his] name"). Thietmar introduces this dream narrative as an oral communication by a "Meinsuith" who had heard it from Theophanu herself.

They instantly said to him as follows: "Father, why don't you ask who we are and why we have come here?" When he had replied to them that he did not dare, he immediately heard their names from them and the reason, and that this would not remain unpunished.

And shortly after a messenger arrived, announcing the young monk's death and the arrival of his corpse.⁴⁴

As mentioned above, Thietmar's rhetoric provides numerous examples of direct speech which also may form part of dialogue situations. Identification or self-identification is not necessarily a topic in them. In cases of a supernatural being involved, however, the story, mostly relying on oral tradition, requires a dialogue situation in order to be successful and plausible. Here personal identity appears to be based on face-to-face-communication, however imaginative this may be in Thietmar's narration.

Shifting to Dialogue: Perpetua and Felicitas

In the course of regional persecutions of Christians at the beginning of the third century, perhaps limited to the Roman province of Africa or even to Carthage,⁴⁵ some young men (Saturus, Saturninus, and others) and two young women (Felicitas and Perpetua) were captured, imprisoned and condemned to death because they had refused to sacrifice to the gods.⁴⁶ Not later than one decade after their lifetime the martyrdom of Vibia Perpetua, Felicitas, and the others in the year 203 was described in the *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, which was rewritten in two short versions presumably still in the same century (Acta I and II or A and B).⁴⁷ These omit the narrative structure of the *Passio*, including the famous so-called diary of Perpetua.

⁴⁴ Thietmar, *Chronik*, IV, 70, pp. 210, 212, quotation at p. 212.

⁴⁵ P. HABERMEHL, *Perpetua und der Ägypter oder Bilder des Bösen im frühen afrikanischen Christentum: Ein Versuch zur "Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis"*, 2nd edn. (Berlin and New York, 2004), pp. 42 f.

⁴⁶ J.E. SALISBURY, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York and London, 1997).

⁴⁷ HABERMEHL, *Perpetua*, pp. 1, 41; for editions see p. 1 n. 1; cf. p. 4. For further editions cf. SALISBURY, *Perpetua's Passion*, p. 209. The manuscript tradition and reception, especially in medieval England, is studied by E.A. RONSSE, *Rhetoric of Martyrs: Transmission and Reception History of the Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* (University of Victoria, 2007), <http://hdl.handle.net/1828/2486>; cf. pp. 17-35 for a comprehensive discussion of the editions and trans-

In the version of Acta I their ensuing suffering is reported like a sequence of dialogue situations. The proconsul Minutius, heading the tribunal, is told to have said to the captives: "The most invincible Emperors Valerianus and Gallienus have commanded that you shall sacrifice". Satorus answers: "We won't do that, for we are Christians".⁴⁸ This hetero-referential statement on one's own identity as a collective identity characterises the next interrogation, too: "Sacrifice to the gods, thus the eternal Emperors have commanded". Satorus is told to have answered: "It is more important to sacrifice to God than to idols". The proconsul: "Do you answer for yourself or for all?" Satorus: "For all, for there is one will in all of us". The proconsul addresses the others: "What do you say?" They answer: "It is true. We have one will".⁴⁹ Then the three young men are interrogated separately twice, but they do not change their opinion. Personalisation and identification are limited to the *iuuenis* as an addressee, whereas the women's interrogation gets closer to their persons. Felicitas has to indicate her name and to give information on her former husband and her parents, as well as Perpetua on her parents. Both, too, are commanded twice to sacrifice to the gods, but they refuse. The structure of a dialogue situation is continued by a scene in which Perpetua and her family are brought together in order to change her mind, which does not occur. Finally the group is condemned to the beasts.⁵⁰

The dialogue appears to be a fine device to produce a vivid impression on everybody listening to or reading the story of the group of young martyrs, its main purpose being to transport sentences of firm conviction and a deeply rooted Christian faith. Dialogue situations, however, were not innate to the story of these martyrs. The older textual realisation, the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, provided a prose text composed of an introduction by the editor and an epilogue as well as the above-mentioned lengthy first person narrative of

lations from 1650 to 2006. *La passione di Perpetua e Felicità*, ed. and trans. M. FORMISANO and E. CANTARELLA (Milan, 2008) was published after this survey.

⁴⁸ *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité suivi des actes*, ed. and trans. J. AMAT (Paris, 1996: *Sources Chrétiennes* 417), p. 278, c. 1: "Minutius proconsul sedens pro tribunali dixit ad eos: 'Inuictissimi principes Valerianus et Gallienus iusserunt ut sacrificetis'. Satorus respondit: 'Hoc non sumus facturi: Christiani enim sumus'".

⁴⁹ *Passion*, ed. AMAT, p. 282, c. 4: "'Sacrificate diis: sic enim iusserunt perpetui principes'. Satorus respondit: 'Deo magis oportet sacrificare quam idolis'. Proconsul dixit: 'Pro te respondes an pro omnibus?' Satorus dixit: 'Pro omnibus: una enim est in nobis uoluntas'. Proconsul ad Saturninum, Reuocatum et Felicitatem et Perpetuam dixit: 'Vos quid dicitis?' At illi responderunt: 'Verum est: unam gerimus uoluntatem'".

⁵⁰ *Passion*, ed. AMAT, p. 282, 284, 286, cc. 4-7.

Perpetua, which was obviously intended to expose, in a far more detailed manner, the young woman's way towards Christendom and martyrdom. In consequence, it may be observed that 'dialogisation' made invisible what can be regarded as a self-testimony of the early third century.

The roles Perpetua and the other martyrs played for the growing Christian communities – discourse communities ready for martyrdom – which are the focus of the interrogatory dialogues, may induce one to conceive them as fine examples of hetero-reference by pronouncing self-referential statements. It may be doubted, however, whether something which has been internalised to such a degree that one is ready to sacrifice one's own life for it can be called hetero-referential? Perhaps, in case they represent the focus of life, those firm (Christian) convictions exhibit the main part of a 'self'. This problem appears to introduce the question of the borders between the realms of the self-referential and the hetero-referential: where do these two categories begin? When does personal reference pass from one side to the other?

Conclusion

The notion of 'dialogue situation' was chosen to outline the field of constructive modes of self-identification by means of dialogue communication. Though subjected to various modes of literacy, 'dialogue situation' enables us to observe and analyse the participants' reported or ascribed hints about themselves. How far did they introduce themselves? To which self or selves did they introduce their addressees? Were the latter listeners or readers? The results of the observation of differing medieval dialogue situations may add a further perspective on the relation of the concepts of self-reference and hetero-reference. Conceiving them as dichotomous does not always lead to the full picture of a situation of self-referentiality. In addition to this – on the other hand – useful and clarifying dichotomy which, by the categories involved, sheds light on the social and cultural implications of self-referentiality, the category of communication, especially face-to-face-communication among present participants, might foster a better understanding of what people do when they introduce themselves.

It thus appears that the topic of individualisation should be shifted to self-identification which may be conceptualised as a specific blend of self-referential as well as hetero-referential modes. Configuring flexible systems of ex-

change, dialogue situations provide applicable material to investigate strategies of delineating an 'I' in a synchronic environment. The presence of an 'other' as well as the situative and topical contexts of a dialogue situation make dialogic self-identification a major field of approaching the individual.

